



# THE TRAGEDY OF AUSTRIA

*By the same Author :*

IN SEARCH OF THE MILLENNIUM  
NEED GERMANY SURVIVE ?  
THE PARADOX OF NATIONALISM

# THE TRAGEDY OF AUSTRIA

by

JULIUS BRAUNTHAL

With an Introduction by  
MICHAEL FOOT, M.P.

Epilogue by  
DR. FRIEDRICH ADLER

APPENDIX:

MUSSOLINI AND DOLLFUSS  
An Episode in Fascist Diplomacy by  
PROFESSOR PAUL R. SWEET

LONDON  
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD  
1948



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But what more oft in nations grown corrupt  
And by their vices brought to servitude,  
Than to love bondage more than liberty.

MILTON, *Samson Agonistes*.

In peace and prosperity states and individuals are governed by higher ideals because they are not involved in necessities beyond their control, but war deprives them of their easy existence and is a rough teacher that brings most men's dispositions down to the level of their circumstances.

THUCYDIDES, *The Peloponnesian War*.

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN BY RICHARD CLAY AND COMPANY, LTD.,  
BUNGAY, SUFFOLK.

TO THE MEMORY OF  
ANTON BÖNISCH

An unknown Socialist worker of Vienna  
who died by the axe of the Nazi executioner



## PREFACE

THE NEW Austria came into being by decision of Great Britain, Soviet Russia and the United States. The survival as an independent State of this most precariously placed country depends chiefly, however, on the determination of the Austrian people themselves. For only if the Austrian people are really inspired by the idea of a State of their own, only if they are devoted to it and earnestly prepared to make the sacrifices required to turn it into a reality, will it be at all possible for this artificially constituted State to endure.

This book is an attempt to discern the psychological structure of the Austrian people and to provide an answer, however inadequate, to anxious queries about the future of Austria.

The student of Austrian affairs is often baffled by the facility and rapidity with which the Austrian people have changed the object of their national sympathy. This happened no fewer than four times in twenty-five years. For nearly a decade they stood squarely for union with Germany; for another four years they were seemingly inspired by the theory that the Austrian people are a nation apart and distinct from the Germans; a few years later they abandoned this theory overnight to become fervent German patriots; yet hardly had seven years elapsed before they again adopted their former conception and once more became Austrian patriots. From these repeated changes it has been concluded that the Austrian people are devoid of any patriotic sentiment at all.

It is possible to demonstrate that every one of these four changes in the Austrian people's sentiments corresponded to changes in internal or external power relations. But such an investigation would fail to explain the psychological riddle of such rapid changes of an emotion which, as the history of every other European nation shows, usually dies hard; still less would this scrutiny be able to account for the absence of any patriotic sentiment among the Austrians. It might, however, be possible to obtain some understanding of the communal psychology of the Austrian people from the peculiar characteristics of their history.

It is this aspect of the Austrian problem with which this

small book is mainly concerned; it has assumed a new acuteness from Russia's apparent design to force Austria into the political and economic orbit of the Soviet Union.

I wish to record my most grateful thanks to Dr. Friedrich Adler, former Secretary of the Labour and Socialist International, for having written the Epilogue to this book. In the first world war Friedrich Adler staked his life in the struggle to maintain the principles of international Socialism in the politics of the Austrian Socialists. His Epilogue states anew the same moral case, applied to the ideological contest in which the problem of Austrian nationality is involved. I am glad to find myself once more in perfect concord with his attitude.

I also wish to express my indebtedness to Professor Paul R. Sweet of the Department of History of the University of Chicago, for his most important contribution to this volume. His publication tears asunder the veil of secrecy in which the relations between Dollfuss and Mussolini were wrapped. The diplomatic correspondence, concerning Dollfuss' *coup d'état* on February 12, 1934, between these two Fascist conspirators, which Mr. Sweet hereby submits to the court of history, destroys once and for ever the myth which has hitherto surrounded Dollfuss. The documents prove beyond any shadow of doubt that Dollfuss, faced after Hitler's advent to power with the choice between a policy of defending Austrian democracy or of annihilating it, chose deliberately the latter course: not, as the legend asserts, under Mussolini's pressure, nor as a "victim of circumstances", but as his own master.

As the reader will notice, there are some points of disagreement between Mr. Sweet's and my own opinion on the degree of responsibility which the Social Democrats have to bear for the way the crisis developed in Austria in the years prior to 1934. Although I do not hesitate to admit that mistakes on the part of the Social Democrats were made, I believe, as I have attempted to show in the book, that the deeper reason for the crisis was an ideological antagonism which could have been resolved only if the Social Democrats had ceased to remain true to their principles and had relinquished the essence of their aims.

JULIUS BRAUNTHAL.

London,

May 1948

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# INTRODUCTION

BY

MICHAEL FOOT

THIS BOOK tells the story of the rise, decline and fall of the Republic and the birth of another. It describes a tragedy of the inter-war years and the painful beginnings of a new hope. The same tale in roughest outline can be told of many countries on the Continent. In that sense the experience is not unique; the bare bones of the record are familiar. And yet there is one aspect of this recital which gives it a peculiar poignancy and, for Socialists, a heightened and especial interest. If any people in Europe in this epoch deserved a better fate it was the workers of Vienna. Austrian Socialism had a quality of its own which Socialists everywhere rightly envied. Its achievements against terrific odds were exceptional, and the men who led the movement were not giants, but brave, upstanding, civilised leaders. "These are deeds which should not pass away and names that must not wither."

It is good, therefore, that this tragic, but heroic, chapter in Socialist history should be faithfully recorded. The Austrian Socialists did not fail in the task of constructive endeavour. They did not fail in courage at the decisive moment. They did not become cynical and sedate. They did not procrastinate and appease. No doubt they made errors. But any fair-minded observer will agree that it was not their own faults which were the cause of their undoing. The responsibility rested in the main with others who denied to Austria and Austrian Socialism the means to live. This fact makes the acts of the Austrian workers shine forth all the brighter. It makes a story of which no Socialist need be ashamed. Indeed, if we were to show respect for the great traditions of our movement, we should treasure this alongside the other epics of working-class struggle. "Red Vienna" won its place in history. Here the full account is given by a man who played a leading and honourable part in a great company. As long as the record of great deeds is one of the most potent forces inspiring others to fresh endeavours we should turn eagerly to the annals of Vienna's martyrdom.

But there is another particular reason why the Austrian Socialists offer to us an example most profitable to-day. The Second World War, unhappily, has not strengthened the bonds of international Socialism as we might have hoped. Left-Wing forces have grown stronger in many European countries. There has been discomfiture and retreat on the Right. But few would dare to assert that the spirit of international comradeship between advancing Left-Wing movements in different countries has been strengthened. Instead the emphasis on strategic frontiers and national interests has increased. Far from being purged of chauvinism, some Left elements have sought to derive strength from it. The fact is incontestable in most countries on the Continent, and here in Britain the Labour Movement in power has sometimes appeared afraid to assert its fellowship with the Socialist Parties in other lands. Altogether, the internationalism which was once the proudest quality of our Socialist faith has been stunted and restrained. It is time that we recaptured it in something like the old glory.

No better instructors in that faith can be wished for than the leaders of Austrian Socialism. They were never tempted to abandon internationalist aspirations and seek a brief safety in a parochial creed. For they could see clearly that, strive as they might, Austria and more still Vienna could not solve all their problems alone. They therefore kept their faith intact. To-day, more than any others, the Austrian Socialists still are citizens of the world. They learnt more bitterly and tragically than others the follies of national sovereignty. More than most others, therefore, they look for European and world solutions. And if world socialism is to emerge successfully and unhurt from the present phase of revived chauvinism, it is certain that the example and teaching of the Austrian Socialists will play an important role in the deliverance.

These are reasons why this book may be read, not out of pity for a stricken people, not merely to study the problems and dilemmas of one small country. It should be read rather as a challenge to our Socialist consciences.

Here in Britain Socialists have their own trials and difficulties. It is natural that our concern should be concentrated upon them. But we ought to have time and imagination to recognise how enviable is our situation compared with that of so many of our comrades on the Continent. How they would wish to constitute a Government in power with the chance, whatever its economic handicaps, to work out its own destiny! How

they would acclaim as undreamt-of and un hoped-for power one-tenth of the opportunity which we possess to initiate great Socialist measures! How they, who have known only a brief interval of political freedom between years of dark tyranny, would treasure as something priceless the firm democratic tradition which our fathers fought for and we have inherited! The Austrian Socialists had none of these rich possessions, but what a mark they made in the world against what mighty enemies! The challenge to us to use our great opportunity bravely and wisely is tremendous. No one with any kindred feeling can read the story of Red Vienna without being a better Socialist for it and more ambitious to ensure that our great experiment shall not fail.

For all these reasons, as well as for the reason that Austria to-day justly expects comradeship and aid from us, this book should be read by British people and, most of all, by British Socialists. It is the story of men who are great allies of ours, even if they did not march in a Victory Parade. They were allies when democracy was fighting its first battle against the onrush of Nazism. They are allies again to-day, when the world craves most for the international spirit and democratic faith which made Vienna famous the world over for something prouder and more enduring than the Hapsburgs.



## CHAPTER ONE

### THE LEGACY OF HISTORY

THE STORY of Austria is one of the most pathetic in Europe's tragic annals. Only three decades ago the country that bears that name was the heart of an empire nearly three times the area of the British Isles, with a population exceeding Britain's by more than a quarter. Excepting only Russia, it was the largest European State. Within the space of a week the Austrian State was broken to pieces. All that remained of the Hapsburg Empire was a country the size of Scotland with a population four-fifths that of London. Although History has witnessed the decline of many an empire, it has rarely seen one swept away so abruptly as was Austria.

After twenty years' unavailing struggle against economic misery and social disruption, this stump of the Hapsburg Empire was once more incorporated into another big State. Seven years later it was again cut away from the economic unit in which it had taken root, and from the national community to which it belongs by virtue of a common language, cultural tradition and historic ties.

The first Republic of Austria was an artificial State created by the victorious Powers after the First World War; it was unable to survive. A second Republic of Austria has again been called into being by the victorious Powers, after a second world war. Like the first Republic, it is an artificial State beset with the same fundamental problems which, in face of the altered and complex conditions, have become still more intricate than before. The great query is whether the second Republic will be more fortunate than the first in surmounting its difficulties.

The first Republic foundered on many a rock. It failed to weather its economic troubles. It failed to create a social equilibrium. It failed, above all, to engender among its people a sentiment of devotion to their country. The Austrians never believed in the durability of their own State; they never even regarded its permanence as desirable. Its maintenance was not an end held in common. They have, indeed, never

known, nor have they ever learned to know, the sentiment of patriotism.

This amazing absence of a sentiment among the Austrian people, which sways with such an overwhelming might every other European nation, is a legacy of the history of the Hapsburg empire.

The Hapsburg empire was, indeed, unique in the sense that the masses of the people which populated it lacked patriotism. In the Austrian Monarchy there were eleven nations,<sup>1</sup> but an Austrian nation, as such, never evolved. Great Britain is composed of four nations. Switzerland, too, has four (if we count the Ladinies as separate), and Belgium two. Yet Britain, Switzerland and Belgium have succeeded in generating among their discrepant nations a common sentiment of affinity and allegiance to a single State. There is, in fact, a British nation, a Swiss nation, a Belgian nation. An Austrian nation has never existed.<sup>2</sup>

This phenomenon is all the more astonishing since Austria was one of the oldest multi-national States of Europe. Most of her nations, which parted from each other without much ado in 1918, had lived together in a common State for centuries. But the habit of living together did not, as might have been expected, generate a common emotion of devotion to this common State.

<sup>1</sup> These eleven nations were as follows: German, Czech, Polish, Ruthenian, Slovenian, Italian, Serb, Croatian, Rumanian and Hungarian; but also the Jews might be counted as a nation, for some millions of them, living in Galicia and Bukovina, spoke Yiddish and retained the characteristics of a distinct nation.

<sup>2</sup> "Austria is an imaginary name; it does not mean a people, a country, a nation. It is the conventional denotation for a complex of nations, distinctly separated from each other. . . . There are Italians, Germans, Slavs, Hungarians, who constitute the Austrian Imperial State, but an Austrian national sentiment is non-existent. . . . A national feeling has arisen among the Slav, Hungarian and Italian peoples—a feeling which is vehemently spreading and is becoming increasingly consolidated, and which is repelling everything alien to it. The sympathy of the Germans [in Austria] has turned, with redoubled power, to their brethren in the North and the West [in Germany]. But this process of segregation indicates not the faintest sign of the awakening of any Austrian national sentiment resembling a sense of community or embracing the peoples of the whole State." This statement was written by a high official of the Imperial Court Chancellery, Baron Viktor Andrian-Werburg, in 1842 (*Oesterreich und dessen Zukunft*, quoted by Dr. Viktor Bibl, *Von Revolution zu Revolution*, p. 41). During the next seventy-four years, till the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire, as enmity between the Austrian nations towards each other became more acute, the absence of a common devotion of the Austrian nations to their common State became all the more conspicuous.

Moreover, Austria came into being by the force, and grew under the pressure, of an overriding need. It was founded about A.D. 796 by Charlemagne as a frontier outpost of the Frankish kingdom as an East Mark,<sup>1</sup> for the defence of the people who lived there, as well as for the defence of Europe, first against the pagan Avars, and later against the pagan Magyars, the terror of Europe for half a century. The Magyar horsemen swept in devastating raids over almost the whole of Europe, first subduing the Bulgarians, Serbs and Croats in the lands which later became Hungary; then they ravaged the German countries of Thuringia, Swabia and Bavaria; they laid waste Lotharingia, they even penetrated Italy as far as Otranto and overran French Burgundy, until they met their doom at the hand of the Emperor Otto I on the Lechfeld near Augsburg in 955. They were then forced eastwards beyond the East Mark, where they were held in check by the Slav inhabitants and German colonists.

Once more a common menace forged together the several loosely connected countries in the area of the Danube, with their multitude of nations, over which the Hapsburgs ruled. This menace emerged from the Mohammedan drive to the West after their conquest of Constantinople in 1453. Wars lasting for nearly 200 years were needed to arrest the invasion. The Turks, under Suleiman the Magnificent, had conquered the Balkans and, by 1526, almost the whole of Hungary, which they subdued for 175 years; they frequently raided Austria, and twice besieged Vienna (in 1529 and in 1683). Had they captured Vienna, the German and Slav people living in Austrian lands would have come under Turkish rule, like the Balkan Slavs and Greeks, and Central Europe might have become Mohammedan.

It was Austria's historic mission in the tenth century to defend Europe against the inroads of the pagan Avars and Magyars, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to defend the Cross against the Crescent, the European civilisation against the Moslem.

Yet even the common destiny of the Austrian nations did not

<sup>1</sup> This fact accounts for the name *Oesterreich* (Austria), i.e., east empire. To be exact, the province Austria of Charlemagne's Empire covered the vast territories which later formed the lands of West Germany, the Rhineland and the Netherlands; the historic Austria emerged not from Charlemagne's Austria, but from his East Mark in the Danube Basin, in 883, when the Margraves of the East Mark were declared immediate princes of the Empire.



create a common feeling of Austrian patriotism—that is, a common national sentiment superseding the sentiment of the individual nations which composed the State. In each of the two consecutive centuries after the Turkish invasion Austria again stood on the verge of disaster through foreign aggression. In 1740, at the accession of Maria Theresa, Prussia, France, Bavaria, Spain, Saxonia and Sardinia contested her throne, and in 1805 Napoleon defeated Austria disastrously on the battlefield of Austerlitz and occupied Vienna. Austria escaped the peril of dissolution on each occasion. This was, however, not due to the patriotism of the Austrian people, which was not called upon by their rulers, but purely to a coincidence of circumstances. In English history the repulsion of the Spanish Armada, as far back as 1588, has left an indelible impression on the minds of English people through the centuries. In those days of peril English patriotism was born. There is no event in the history of Austria which produced among her nations a lasting enthusiasm for their State.

Nor did a common economy prove a stronger tie to bind together the congeries of the Austrian nations. In the course of centuries, through slow development, the economy of the several Austrian countries merged, interlacing the cattle-breeding Alps of the western provinces and the wheat-growing plains of the eastern provinces with the industrial districts of Lower Austria, Styria and Bohemia. There was a healthy equilibrium of the economic resources of the Empire. Austria-Hungary was to a very high degree self-supporting; she imported and exported less per head of the population than other important countries, except Russia, while the development of her own resources steadily increased the wealth of the Empire. In the decade prior to the outbreak of the war, the national income of old Austria rose by 69 per cent—at a quicker rate than in Great Britain and even in Germany. Though the standard of living of the Austrian people at large was lower than that of the people in Germany and in most, if not all, of the Western countries, it was considerably higher than that in the countries adjacent to the eastern and southern borders of the Austrian Empire. The nations which contemplated breaking away from it perhaps realised that its destruction would dissolve the vast economic unit which embraced the labour and purchasing power of 54,000,000 people; they realised, perhaps, that the small nation-States, emerging from the ruins of the empire, would have to pay for their own

independent statehood with an unmitigated misery. Our age of modern industry requires big spaces and big markets. Yet these economic considerations counted for nothing.

The weakest link in the brittle chain of unity was, however, the dynasty. The Hapsburgs ruled Austria for more than 600 years, from 1282 until 1918. They survived all the dynasties on the English throne from the Plantagenet, Edward I, onwards; they survived several French dynasties: the Capets, the House of Valois, the House of Bourbon; they were already the greatest dynasty in Europe at the time of the Renaissance. From 1438 onwards Charlemagne's imperial crown of the Holy Roman Empire was to all intents and purposes a hereditary attribute of the House of Hapsburg. The Hapsburgs were also kings of Bohemia and Hungary for 300 years, and for a time the wearers of the iron crown of Lombardy. They ruled for centuries, in addition to Austria proper, Belgium, the Netherlands, Lorraine and most of Italy; they ruled Spain with her vast dominions in the Western hemisphere. Yet from this magnificent edifice of power, tradition and glamour that emotion of national pride which forms such an essential ingredient of patriotism everywhere did not emanate; that impressive edifice dissipated in the twinkling of an eye, and when the last reigning Hapsburg fell not a finger was raised to stay him.

How are these strange contradictions to be explained? The key to the riddle is to be found in the peculiar history of Austria. It is peculiar, because it is the history, not of a nation or of a country, but of a cosmopolitan dynasty which ruled over a multitude of nations and countries and never attached itself to a single nation or a single country. The Hapsburg empire was a vast collection of hereditary estates in Spain and the Netherlands as well as in the Germanic Alps. After the partition of these estates between the Spanish and the Austrian branch of the Hapsburgs at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Austrian Hapsburgs acquired Bohemia and Hungary. They administered Austria through an aristocracy of Italian, French and Spanish extraction (the Spanish ceremonial remained the ceremonial of the Austrian Court until its end), who were more or less loyal to their royal master, but remained always alien to the people, and were just as anxious as their emperor to frustrate the rise of popular national forces.

Thus the history of Austria was the history of the House of

Hapsburg, the history of dynastic wars and dynastic marriages, of gains or losses in the Hapsburgs' struggle for more lands and power. It was not the history of the Austrian people themselves, as, for example, the history of Great Britain. Great Britain's history may be, in part, a history of Britain's dynasties and of their wars and conquests, but it is essentially the history of the British people. For centuries it was dominated by the struggle of the people for their rights against the King. It was the history of the struggle of free conscience against a State Church and of Parliament against the Crown. At least since Chatham, if not since 1688, Britain's destiny had been moulded and mastered by the people through Parliament, however aristocratic its composition. While the common man in England was excluded from power, he was by no means powerless; since Cromwell he had participated in the political and religious struggles of his time and exerted his influence most effectively in the street. The same is true for France, since 1789. Since the Great Revolution France's history had been the history of the French people, a history of political struggles between democracy and royal absolutism, and of social struggles between the working class and the middle class. But above all social and political strife stood *la patrie*, the common fatherland of all Frenchmen, whose country in 1789 had ceased to be a royal estate and had become the people's property. French patriotism was born in the hour when the French people themselves began to participate in the destiny of their country.

Because the British and the French people felt themselves to have a share in the destiny of their country, they identified themselves with their country.

To Austrians of all nationalities the Hapsburg empire was not their country; it was an estate of the Crown.<sup>1</sup> They had no share in their country's destiny, they were excluded from any participation in the affairs of the State, and every endeavour at popular self-assertion was always ruthlessly broken. Thus the history of Austria contains no record of the history of the Austrian people, except for a few tragic pages narrating their unavailing attempts to rise.

In fact, the Austrian people appear only three times on the

<sup>1</sup> The principle of dynastic property was most strikingly expressed in the denomination of the Austrian provinces; until the end of the Monarchy in 1918 they continued to bear the expressive designation of *Kronländer* (Crownlands).

stage of Hapsburg history. First, in 1525, when the peasants of Upper Austria and the miners of Styria and Carinthia rose; they were so thoroughly and cruelly crushed that no trace of the rising remained in the memory of the peasants of later generations.

The second appearance of the people was at the time of the Reformation, when this movement, spreading from the German States all over Austria, embraced the common people of all the Hapsburg's lands with the exception of the northern fringe of the Tyrol. Ferdinand II was resolved to crush his people once and for all. "Better a desert than a land of heretics," he said. And he succeeded. Austria became a desert, a spiritual as well as an economic desert. The people were "made Catholic", the rights of the towns were obliterated, the rising middle class was broken, the minds of many generations were devastated by the spirit of Jesuitism—that graceless spirit of insincerity, servility and hypocrisy, with its total lack of any sense of responsibility and dignity.

Austria was left as much an economic as a spiritual desert. The burghers, deprived of freedom and subjected to police regimentation, lost their economic impetus. In the Alpine countries, particularly in Vienna, the chances of industrial prosperity had been destroyed for more than 200 years. Economic decay was further accelerated by events which followed on the heel of the triumph of Catholicism.

The Counter-Reformation in the Alpine countries was merely the prelude to an even more devastating scourge of repression in Bohemia. The Hapsburgs obtained the Kingdom of Bohemia in 1526. The Bohemian aristocracy had retained their power, and in order to defend their privileges against encroachment by the Hapsburgs, they made common cause with the forces evoked by the Reformation. Their resistance was broken in the battle of the White Mountain, in 1620. The indigenous nobility were killed or driven into exile, their estates confiscated and partitioned among foreign adventurers in the service of the Hapsburgs; the Czech middle class was subjugated, and the holocaust of war unleashed by this battle lasted for thirty years and utterly desolated great parts of Bohemia.

The decisive victory of the Counter-Reformation established Hapsburg absolutism for more than 200 years. The Hapsburgs had now found that they could rely only on the Catholic Church and the professional army; so Church and army

became paramount in Austria. The Hapsburgs had found, moreover, that their mainstay was the foreign aristocracy, which had no roots in the Austrian soil; so the cosmopolitan aristocracy became more firmly entrenched in Austria than ever before.

What the Hapsburgs feared most was any revival of a popular movement, even of popular patriotism, because such forces, in whatever garb, appeared to be a potential menace to the system of centralised absolutism which had triumphed in the Counter-Reformation. When Prussian and French armies invaded Austria in 1740, and threatened the very existence of the Hapsburg empire, the Empress Maria Theresa anxiously avoided arousing the patriotism of the Austrian people; she appealed solely to the Hungarian magnates for help. When, in 1813, the German people rose in a patriotic war of liberation against Napoleon, Francis I, frightened by the consequences of the emergence of patriotism among the Austrian people, struck out from the imperial manifesto an appeal to them to die for their fatherland; he appealed to them to die for the Emperor.<sup>1</sup> As the idea of co-operation between the rulers and the ruled in Austria was excluded, patriotism was unwanted; it was regarded, in fact, as a revolutionary poison and as the greatest enemy to order and religion. What was solely required from the people was obedience and loyalty to the Crown. The State was to be administered by a bureaucracy with an omnipotent police as its arm—to be a little more explicit, by “a standing army of soldiers, a seating army of officials, a kneeling army of priests and a sneaking army of informers”, as a witty contemporary of young Francis-Joseph I has put it. From the days of Maria Theresa, under whose reign (1740–80) the bureaucratic edifice was constructed, until the end of the empire in 1918, Austria was the symbol and pattern of the perfect Police-State.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> After Austria's defeats at Ulm and Austerlitz, followed by the Treaty of Pressburg (1806), which forced Austria to the cession of Venice and the Tyrol, Francis I gave way to his liberal advisers at the Court. He appointed Count Stadion, head of the Liberal Party, his Chancellor, who introduced a popular army, contemplated reforms and made attempts of a patriotic nature designed to incite mass reactions of enthusiasm against the French menace. However, after the Battle of Wagram (1809), in which Austria was once more defeated and humiliated by Napoleon, Francis abandoned liberalism, dismissed Stadion, appointed Metternich, and patriotism was again considered suspect and even subversive.

<sup>2</sup> James Bryce considered the Austrian empire (in 1865) as “the true daughter of the old despotism: not less tyrannical, not less aggressive, not less

The Hapsburgs' aversion to the patriotism of the masses becomes immediately intelligible when we remember the national structure of the Austrian State.

At the time of the birth of nationalism the idea of patriotism was always associated with the idea of national unity and political liberty. The German patriots who rose against Napoleon aimed at a united democratic Germany superseding the scores of despotical German principalities. They did not desire to die for the tyrannical Prussian, Saxonian or Hanoverian king; they wanted to fight for a free German fatherland.

What, however, was the fatherland to the Germans or Czechs or Italians in Austria? They had no national fatherland, still less political liberty. The rise of patriotism among the nations of Austria would inevitably have awakened their appetite for national self-assertion and freedom, and would have challenged the system of centralised absolutism, which was diametrically opposed to national as well as to civic rights.

But absolutism, which in the eighteenth century may have been an indispensable instrument for forging together the discrepant fragments of the Hapsburg Empire into one State, became obsolete in the nineteenth century, which reverberated with the cry for the Rights of Man. The ideas of the French Revolution slowly penetrated even the minds of the people of Central Europe. When the people of Paris rose again, in February 1848, overthrowing Louis-Philippe and proclaiming the Second Republic, their revolution kindled uprisings in Austria, Hungary and Germany. This was the third appearance of the Austrian people on the stage of Hapsburg history. It seemed as if the Hapsburgs' absolutism had come to an end. The Emperor submitted without a fight to the demands of revolutionary Vienna. He dismissed Metternich, embodiment of the autocratic regime; he promised the promulgation of a democratic constitution; the Jesuit Order, hated symbol of spiritual absolutism, was expelled from the country. For more than half a year Vienna was in the hands of the revolutionaries, and head of the revolution throughout the German States.

The revolution in Austria, however, immediately brought the national problems of the Hapsburg Empire to the fore.

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retrograde; like its progenitor, the friend of priests, the enemy of free thought, the trampler upon the national feeling of the people that obey it"; he called it "the most sordid and ungenial of modern despotisms". *The Holy Roman Empire*, p. 384, 386.

The Hungarians and Italians wanted to break away from it. The Germans aimed at the unification of all their compatriots into a Greater Germany which was to include the Alpine countries and Bohemia; the Czechs, rejecting the idea of incorporating Bohemia into a united Germany, discussed a Pan-Slav union of all the Slav countries under Russia's lead. The national and political aims of the various revolutions were, however, beyond the strength of the middle class, then still weak, and of the working class, still in its infancy. So the Hapsburgs were able to quell these risings piecemeal in Italy, Hungary, Prague and Vienna.

Absolutism had again triumphed. The Hapsburgs abrogated the democratic constitution granted during the revolution, and ruled by force. Aristocracy and Church, bureaucracy, police and army again became paramount.

But after ten years that edifice collapsed through the impact of defeats in wars against the French in Italy and the Prussians in Germany. The Hapsburgs lost Lombardy, in 1859, and Venetia, in 1866, and were expelled from the Confederation of German States of which they had hitherto been the leaders.

The Hapsburgs realised that they would jeopardise the whole empire if they did not make a gesture of co-operation, if not with the whole of their people, at least with the middle classes. In December 1867 a constitution was promulgated, which, while excluding the working class from any influence upon the legislature, granted bankers, merchants, manufacturers and the upper strata of the peasantry a little say in affairs of State. Yet it was merely a gesture, for the power of absolutism was scarcely impaired. And although the franchise for the Austrian Parliament was slowly extended and in 1907 even became universal, the prerogatives of the Crown remained in the last resort supreme. Austria was, what she always had been, a despotism, though now a despotism in disguise. It was, to be fair, not a cruel tyranny, compared with the Tsarist despotism of those days or with the Hitler despotism of our day; it was an effete, almost imbecile despotism. It was dominated by an aristocracy, typified by Count Berchtold, who set the world ablaze with the same disarming nonchalance with which he used to play roulette. It was administered by a bureaucracy, honest yet irresponsible, servile towards superiors, yet surly and often brutal towards the common man; it was, above all, sluggish and petty, and engaged in interminable malicious personal squabbles. Though

Austria was a despotism, she was, in Victor Adler's famous phrase, "a despotism mitigated by slovenliness".

This system failed first of all to solve the national problems of Austria and failed, therefore, to create among the Austrian nations a sentiment of allegiance to the common State. The cosmopolitan Hapsburg aristocracy shared its power with the Hungarian and the Polish aristocracy, and although it pretended to be willing to co-operate in turn with the German and Czech middle classes, in fact it played off the one against the other, according to a well-established rule. "My nations are alien to each other—so much the better," stated the Emperor, Francis I. "I keep down the Italians by means of the Hungarians and the Hungarians by means of the Italians; their mutual antipathy produces order and their mutual hatred produces general peace." It was the well-considered guiding principle of Austria's rulers to keep alive the mutual suspicions and prejudices of their nations.

The national situation in the empire at the end of the Hapsburgs' days can be roughly summed up as follows: the Magyar aristocracy kept the Croats, Serbs and Rumanians in Hungary suppressed; the Polish aristocracy kept down the Ruthenians in Galicia and Bukovina; the Hapsburg aristocracy kept down the Southern Slavs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Italians in Trieste and Trentino. The Czechs and Slovaks, though not actually oppressed, felt that they were being treated as inferiors.

But the Germans also were dissatisfied. The German middle class, particularly the intelligentsia, regarded Germany as its spiritual home, and aspired to unification with her; in the meantime they fought stubbornly any national concession which the Hapsburgs were forced to grant to the rising Czech middle class. This sickening national struggle for the use of the Czech language in the Courts and post offices in the border districts of Bohemia paralysed Parliament, made democracy unworkable, and left the power of the State to a barren regime of absolutism, slovenliness and corruption.

Thus none of the nations felt quite at home in the Hapsburg Empire; to them the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy was not a common house to live in, but rather a common prison.

About two-thirds of the Austrian people in the western half of the Dual Monarchy were Slavs; they, rightly or wrongly, hated living in this State. The German Austrians were divided in their sentiment of allegiance. The German upper class



accepted Austria so long as its ascendancy over the Slav nations remained unimpaired; the German intellectuals aspired to unification with the Reich; the German workers accepted Austria without love, as a matter of expediency, and tried to make the best of a bad job; the German peasants cherished parochial, but not imperial, loyalty. The only genuine Austrian patriots were the members of the nobility, the professional officer corps of the army, the higher ranks of the bureaucracy, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and, influenced by the Church, the lower middle class of Vienna, organised by Karl Lueger into the Christian-Social Party. Putting together all these groups, they were a meagre proportion of the Austrian people.

The situation in the eastern half of the empire, in Hungary, was similar. There nearly half the population was Slav, and ruthlessly suppressed by the Magyar aristocracy; they were in a permanent state of revolt against the regime of oppression; so they were not "patriots". The Magyar peasants, treated as serfs by their nobility, also hated the regime. But even the Hungarian aristocracy and the Hungarian Jewish merchants, industrialists and intellectuals accepted the union with Austria only reluctantly and conditionally; they were, in the first place, Hungarian nationalists; they cherished no particular sentiment of allegiance towards the Hapsburg Crown, the symbol of the Austrian "idea".

The Austrian empire was thus seething with national strife during the last half-century of its life. The Czechs were no longer willing to tolerate German predominance; the Croats revolted against oppression by the Hungarian aristocracy; the Italian *irredenta* increased the vigour of their resolve to break away from Austria; the Magyars revolted against the supremacy of the Austrians; the Ukrainians suffered under the dominance of the Polish aristocracy. The public life of the Hapsburg Monarchy was poisoned and paralysed by this war of all against all.

This multi-national State could have been saved only by a fundamental change in its constitution. It would have to be transformed into a democratic federative State, a solution which the Austrian Socialists untiringly propagated. It would then have been possible to reconcile the just claims of the disinherited nations to autonomy and freedom and to integrate them in a democratic commonwealth. Something like a new Switzerland on a vast scale would have evolved, and the

Austro-Hungarian State would have become the pattern for a federation of the European nations.

But the Hapsburgs were neither ready nor willing at any time for such far-reaching reforms. Such bold attempts would inevitably have forced the dynasty into an alliance with the German and Czech working class as well as with the Hungarian, Polish and Ukranian peasants against the aristocracy and the middle classes. For the democratisation of the State would have imperilled the privileges of the nobility and of the middle classes. But Hapsburg tradition and history precluded an alliance between the Crown and the working classes against the nobility and the middle classes. They chose to "keep the nations in a state of well balanced discontent", in order to dominate all of them the more easily, as Count Taaffe, Austrian Prime Minister for fourteen years (1879-93), frankly observed. Thus they maintained a system which, because it centralized all the power of the government, separated the feelings and interests of the administration from the sympathy and prosperity of the broad masses of the people.

Austria remained an estate of the House of Hapsburg and never became a people's State. The Austrians never felt that they shared the destiny of their rulers. They had cheered and thrown flowers across the path of Napoleon when he rode through the streets of Vienna as Austria's conqueror. They cared not two straws when the Hapsburgs lost Lombardy and Venetia at the battles of Magento and Solferino. When Austria was defeated by Prussia at Königgrätz in 1866 and the Government desperately called on the people of Vienna to form a Home Guard, only 3000 men out of 200,000 available answered the appeal. Nor was there any joy or satisfaction among the common people when the Hapsburg enlarged their empire by the occupation and later annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. When the Empire was finally, in 1914, faced with a supreme trial, it could not stand the test. So the edifice of centuries collapsed overnight. None of the nations wished to preserve a State which had never been their spiritual home. The peculiar conditions of the rise and the decline of the multinational Hapsburg Empire precluded the development of genuine patriotism among any of the Austrian people.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE BIRTH OF THE FIRST AUSTRIAN REPUBLIC

ALTHOUGH THE collapse of the Hapsburg empire appeared to have come suddenly, it was in fact freely forecast from the rostrum of the Austrian Parliament nearly one year and a half before the event occurred; to be exact, on May 30, 1917. On that day Parliament assembled for the first time since the Emperor had suspended it in the beginning of 1914. He had inflicted the fearful tribulations of a world war upon his people without feeling the need for consulting their representatives. Yet when Parliament met, under the pressure of a hard-hit people, in its first session the Slav deputies (with the exception of the Poles) announced in solemn declarations their firm resolve to form nation-States. The Czechs demanded the union of all Czechs and Slovaks "in a single democratic Bohemian State", the South Slavs "the unification of all territories of the Monarchy inhabited by Slovenes, Croats and Serbs in one independent political body, free from all domination", and the Ukrainians of East Galicia and Bukovina, separation from the Poles.

The Austro-Hungarian empire fell to pieces at the very moment when the central power of the State collapsed. None of the nations which inhabited it wanted to retain it, and as there was no force available to compel them to remain in this multi-national State, they broke away from it. The Western Powers intended by no means the dismemberment of the Hapsburg Empire. "The break-up of Austria-Hungary is no part of our war aims," declared Lloyd George in a speech on January 5, 1918, previously approved by the Cabinet and by the Dominions. And what Woodrow Wilson demanded, in his Fourteen Points (proclaimed three days later), was merely "the freest opportunity of autonomous development" for the "peoples of Austria-Hungary". Nor did France desire the dissolution of that State; she wanted, in fact, to retain it as a counter-weight against Germany.

Yet the hatred of the Dual Monarchy was so universal among its nations that none of them could be induced to maintain it, even if reconstructed as a federation of democratic nation-States. When the Hapsburgs' military machine disintegrated, the Czechs and Slovaks proclaimed the Czechoslovak Republic, the Poles joined the newly formed Polish Republic, the Italians joined Italy, the Croats and Slovenes united with the Serbs in Yugoslavia, and Hungary severed her ties with Austria and became an independent State. All that was left to the Germans in Austria were the Alpine territories with a huge city at their eastern fringe and the Sudeten territories in the borderlands of Bohemia and Moravia.

The Slav nations had, during the war, prepared their separation from the Hapsburg empire. But to the German Austrians its collapse came as a great surprise. Only the left wing of the Social Democratic Labour Party, led by Otto Bauer, had foreseen the course of that development and had, as early as October 1917, submitted to the Party Conference a declaration, stating that it was the duty of the German-Austrian Socialists to recognize "the Czech right of self-determination and the right of the Slovenes, Croats and Serbs to unite into a Southern-Slav commonwealth". The declaration also demanded "the support of the Polish aim at the unification of the Polish people, including those of Galicia and Silesia, in an independent Poland". Finally, the declaration demanded the unification of German-Austria with Germany, that is, "the unity and freedom of the German nation in a democratic German commonwealth".

But the suggestion, put forward by the Socialist Left, that the Austro-Hungarian State might, in the course of national revolutions, be dismembered into its component parts appeared, in October 1917, so fantastic that it was rejected by the Socialist Party Conference; instead it insisted on the reconstruction of Austria on national-federative lines.

Yet slowly the conception of the inevitability of the dissolution of the empire became accepted, if not by the middle classes and the peasants, at any rate by the German-Austrian workers. So when the Slav, Latin and Hungarian nations parted from Austria, the German deputies of the former Austrian Parliament assembled, on October 21, 1918, and, accepting the Socialist suggestion, proclaimed German-Austria an independent State. The proclamation included in the State all Austrian territories with a German population in the Alpine

countries as well as in Bohemia and Moravia. About three weeks later, on November 12, German-Austria was declared a Republic and a "constituent part of the German Republic".

### *The Anschluss*

The desire of the German Austrians to unite with the German people of the German Republic was the natural sequel to their past. The German Austrians are, of course, Germans, just as, for instance, the Bavarians, Rhinelanders, or the Saxons. The German Swiss, living together with French and Italians for centuries, have merged with them into a Swiss nation; so the German Swiss feels that he belongs to the Swiss commonwealth, not merely politically, but also emotionally. The German Austrians had never merged into an emotional whole with the other nations living in Austria. In the national welter of the multi-national Monarchy the German Austrians felt emotionally nearer to the Germans beyond the border of the State than to the non-Germans within the State. They held in common with all Germans not merely their language, but also the whole of their cultural and historical heritage. For example, German-Austrian literature, however deep its provincial hue, they conceived as a part of German literature, and not as a separate Austrian heritage. Anastasius Grün, Maria Ebner von Eschenbach, Arthur Schnitzler, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, though Austrians, were regarded by the German Austrians as purely German novelists and poets, just as the English people think of Bernard Shaw as an English writer, regardless of his Irish origin. In fact, Franz Grillparzer, the greatest German-Austrian dramatist, was far less popular among the German Austrians than, say, Friedrich Schiller or Heinrich Kleist, and one of the finest Austrian novelists, Adalbert Stifter, was far less popular than, for example, the Swiss novelist Gottfried Keller. Though the German nation was divided into different States, the German heritage remained indivisible.

It is certainly true that the German Austrians on the whole are slightly different in temper and mentality from, say, the Prussians. But similar differences exist between the Bavarians and Prussians, the Rhinelanders and the Saxons, the Swabians and Hessians (just as there are slight differences in temper and mentality between, say, the Cornish people and those of Lancashire).

It is further true that the German Austrians lived politically separated from the other German peoples for many centuries. But it should be remembered that the other German peoples also lived in States of their own, separated politically from each other for centuries. Germany as an organized single State came into being only two generations ago, in 1871; until then Germany was merely a geographical, but scarcely a political, conception. What had been called the Holy Roman Empire of the German nation for 1,000 years was in fact not a State, but consisted of scores of States which, while recognising the title of a German Emperor, were (at least since 1648) independent in all but name.<sup>1</sup> These States—more than 300 before the Napoleonic wars and still three dozen in 1870—concluded alliances with non-German Powers and waged wars against each other and frequently even against the German Emperor.

Austria was always part, and the most powerful part, of the German Roman Empire; from the fifteenth century onwards (with two exceptions) the Austrian rulers were always German emperors. The German Roman Empire was dissolved in 1806, but when it was revived in the form of the German Confederation in 1815,<sup>2</sup> Austria again assumed her supremacy, and

<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Westphalia (1648) established the "Liberty of the Stande", that is, the right of the individual, separate States, which composed the German Empire, to make alliances with each other and with foreign rulers. The Emperor was still the fount of honour; but, except for the grant of titles, his prerogatives had disappeared. The legislative power was exercised by the Diet at Regensburg, which consisted of three Colleges (the seven Electors, the secular and ecclesiastical Princes and the Free Cities), sitting separately. If two Colleges agreed, and their wishes were sanctioned by the Emperor, the resolution became an Imperial law; but its execution depended on the separate decisions of each separate unit, large or small, of which the Empire was composed. Voltaire rightly inquired in which respect the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation was holy or Roman or an Empire. It was not even German throughout, for the King of England was one of its members as Elector of Hanover, the King of Denmark as Duke of Holstein, the King of Sweden as Lord of Pomerania, and even Belgium participated as an appanage of the House of Hapsburg.

<sup>2</sup> The German Confederation of 1815 included all territories populated by Germans, except the Swiss and Baltic territories. Even the King of Denmark was a member of the Confederation in so far as he was Duke of Holstein, and so was the King of the Netherlands, as Grand Duke of Luxembourg. Of the Hapsburg Empire the following territories participated in the Confederation: the Archduchy of Austria, the Duchies of Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Austrian Frioli (that is, the district of Gorizia), the city of Trieste and its territory, the County of Tyrol with Trent and Brixen, the Duchy of Salzburg, the Kingdom of Bohemia, the Margraviate of Moravia, and Austrian Silesia. Hungary, Galicia and Lombardo-Venetia

retained it until 1866, when, after her defeat at Sadowa, Prussia ousted Austria from the German Confederation. Thus until 1866 Austria was as much as any of the German States a constituent part of Germany.

It was the supreme aim of the revolution in 1848 to transform the loose German Confederation into a real united State, embracing all the German peoples and States, including the German Austrians. The British, French and Spanish people had attained national unity centuries before. In 1848 the German, Italian and Polish people still had to fight for this end. The fight for national unity was necessarily at the same time a fight against the prerogatives of the German princes—a fight, in fact, for democracy against the absolute power of the German dynasties, because national unity could be achieved only by the reduction of their sovereignty. The first action of the revolution, indeed, was to replace the Federal Diet of the German princes by a Parliament of the German people (the Frankfort Parliament).

The revolution was defeated, and yet the German States were ultimately united. But the unification of the Germans was accomplished not by German democracy, but by Prussian militarism; it remained, furthermore, incomplete, for it excluded the 10,000,000 Germans living in Austria.

The middle classes in the German States, which stood in the forefront of the revolution in 1848, dismayed by the rise of the working class after Prussia's victory over France in 1870, accepted Bismarck's autocratic constitution of the German empire. The German middle class in Austria was divided in its attitude towards the "German Question". The intellectuals still upheld the idea of German unity. But the united Germany which most of them visualised was not a united democratic German Republic, but the imperial Hohenzollern Germany of Bismarck, forged with "blood and iron". The big industrialists and bankers, however, wanted to retain the Hapsburg empire, which secured them an economic as well as political predominance over the Slav nations.

But the Left Democrats, centred round the Social Demo-

were not part of the Confederation. The Confederation was not a proper State, like, for instance, the Federation of Switzerland or of the United States. There was a Federal Diet, situated at Frankfurt, and presided over by Austria, but the member states of the Confederation retained their full sovereignty, and even went to war against each other, e.g., Prussia against Austria, Saxony and Hanover in 1866.

cratic Party, in Germany as well as in Austria, did not relinquish the aim of national unity on a democratic republican basis. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, August Bebel and Victor Adler hoped for the emergence of a new revolution, which would break up the Hapsburg multi-national State, overthrow the dynasties of the Hapsburgs and Hohenzollerns, and would thus open the road towards the Greater German Republic.

This revolution came in 1918, seventy years after the revolution of 1848, and forty-seven years after the formation of the German empire under Prussia's supremacy. It happened as Karl Marx had foreseen it: the Hapsburg empire collapsed, the Hohenzollern dynasty was swept away, and Germany was proclaimed a Republic. When the Austrian Social Democrats raised the demand at this juncture for union with the German Republic, they were only carrying out the testament of the German revolution of 1848.

In the hour of decision, when the Monarchy collapsed, the Austrian Socialists were able to rally the whole of the country behind the idea of the *Anschluss*. The Provisional National Assembly unanimously proclaimed Austria a "constituent part of the German Republic" on November 12, 1918, and the following general election, in February 1919, confirmed this decision almost unanimously.

Yet the urge for the *Anschluss* was only partly motivated by the idea of national unity, which was undoubtedly behind the attitude of the intellectuals. The national idea, however, influenced the working class far less. In Austria the working class, in their forty years' struggle for a better standard of life and political equality, always had to combat German nationalist managers in the factories, and, in the State, Hapsburg bureaucrats, policemen and jailers; these both attempted to counteract free trade unionism and Socialism, the former invoking the sentiment of German nationalism, the latter the sentiment of Austrian patriotism. German nationalism and Hapsburg patriotism were thus equally hated by the Socialist workers. This hatred of both these ideologies was a deep-rooted tradition of the German Socialist workers' movement in Austria.

When, however, the Hapsburg and the Hohenzollern empires collapsed, and Austria as well as Germany became a republic, many Socialist workers wished for the fusion of the two republics into a single one, because they realized the



narrow limits of Socialist progress in their own country, in which scarcely more than two-fifths of the population belonged to the industrial working class.

But far stronger than the ideological motives were the economic necessities which urged the working class, and indeed the overwhelming majority of the Austrian people, to seek union with Germany.

### *The Economic Conditions of the Austrian Republic*

The Republic of Austria, as it emerged from the ruins of the Monarchy, was a melancholic torso. The victorious Powers allowed Austria not even the whole of the torso: almost two-fifths of the total of the German-Austrian population—nearly 4,000,000 out of 10,000,000—were, together with the areas where they lived, sliced off the newly formed State. Czech troops occupied and annexed territories in Bohemia and Moravia, inhabited by 3,500,000 German Austrians; Italian troops occupied and annexed territories in South Tyrol, inhabited by 250,000 German Austrians; Yugoslav troops occupied and annexed some valleys in Carinthia populated by some tens of thousands of German Austrians. Austria was reduced by the Treaty of Saint Germain, signed on September 10, 1919, to 32,352 square miles, with a population of 6,535,759 people (according to the first census of the Republic, in March 1923). What then remained was a stretch of high mountainous lands, the size of Scotland, with Vienna, a great city housing nearly 2,000,000 people, lying at the eastern fringe of the new State.

Vienna had been the administrative centre of the whole of the Austro-Hungarian empire, populated by 54,000,000 people; it was its commercial, banking and cultural centre; moreover, it had been an international mart for the whole trade of Europe between the West, the East and the Balkans. Its manifold functions had now suddenly ceased, but its population remained. A city of nearly 2,000,000 became the capital of a country with a total population of little more than six and a half millions.

Vienna and its surrounding lowland, together with Upper Styria, had been one of the two main workshops of the whole of the Austro-Hungarian empire and the Balkans (the other was Bohemia). The political disruption of the empire naturally enforced its economic disruption. Cotton yarn was spun in

Austria and woven in Bohemia, and Bohemian goods were made up in Austrian clothing factories. The steel works in Styria employed Moravian coke, and those in Moravia Styrian ore. Now Bohemia and Moravia, parts of Czechoslovakia, became an independent economic unit, and left Austria an excess of spindles and a lack of looms, an excess of ore and a lack of hard coal.

It was quite natural that the newly founded nation-States (the so-called Succession States) were anxious to develop industries on their own territories and to protect them with high customs barriers against Austrian competition; that, at any rate, was what they did. Lord Layton and Professor Rist estimated in their Report to the Council of the League of Nations that in 1924, at a time when the newly founded States had already settled down, the exports of Austria to these States were still less than half of what they had been in the last year of peace before the disruption of the empire. Yet while the industry of the Austrian Republic lost half its market, the whole industrial population had to remain in the country.

Industrial exports are of the highest importance for Austria's economic life, even of a higher importance than Britain's need for export, because Austria is even less able than Britain to feed her population from her own resources.

Austria is an Alpine country; 92·3 per cent of its total area is mountainous, and only 4·5 per cent consists of plains. More than a tenth of the total area of the country is barren and entirely unproductive, and nearly three-fifths of its productive territories are covered with natural pastures.

Austria's agriculture was therefore able to produce only a fraction of the country's needs, particularly where wheat was concerned; two-thirds of the wheat supply needed for the feeding of the population, one-fifth of the rye supply, one-third of the barley and one-fifth of the oats had to be imported. Austria was not even self-sufficient in its meat supply. Although stock-breeding and dairy-farming in the Alpine districts were fairly developed, she was as yet unable to produce the quantities of meat needed for keeping the most modest level of nutrition; live animals had to be imported at the rate of more than 9 per cent of the total Austrian imports. Imports of food and meat together amounted to 37 per cent of the total.

Still less was Austria able to produce her fuel requirements; scarcely 30 per cent of the quantity of coal required could be

supplied from her own resources, and no hard coal at all. Austria possesses in Styria one of the largest European deposits of iron-ore, exploited since the dawn of the iron age; but for the process of smelting it was dependent on the supply of hard coal from Czechoslovakia. Austria possesses a big textile industry, employing more than 70,000 workers; but she had to buy nearly all the necessary raw materials from abroad. Almost three-tenths of Austria's total imports consisted of coal and raw materials.

Such, then, was the economic position of the new State. It was the common conviction of the Austrian people that their country could live, and prosper once again, only if it were incorporated into a big economic unit. And as the idea of a Danube Federation was rejected by all the newly founded nation-States, there remained only the economic unit of Germany as the last refuge for a bankrupt Austria.

### *The Prohibition of the Anschluss*

After long deliberations, the Peace Conference at Paris, disregarding the unanimous declaration of the Austrian National Assembly, decided to prohibit the unification of Austria with Germany.

Britain, the United States of America and France had waged war against the autocratic dynasties of Germany and Austria in the name of democracy and the right of self-determination of the people. Clearly the interdiction of the *Anschluss* was a flagrant violation of the principle of self-determination. It might have shocked the sense of fairness of the British and American people if their governments had bluntly told the Austrian people that they were simply deprived of this, their right of self-determination, and that however strong might be their desire to join Germany, they must not join. So the Treaty of Saint Germain chose a more diplomatic language. It did not speak of the ban of the *Anschluss*; it spoke only about Austria's "independence". Article 88 of the Treaty declared that the "independence" of Austria was inalienable except with the consent of the Council of the League of Nations, and that Austria must engage herself to abstain from any act likely "to compromise her independence" by other means. At the same time the Treaty of Versailles imposed upon Germany the obligation to acknowledge and respect the "independence of Austria within the limits of the Treaty of Saint Germain" and

to agree that this "independence" should be inalienable except by consent of the League of Nations.<sup>1</sup>

In fairness it must be recalled that the United States and Britain were in the beginning willing to honour their pledge to allow self-determination. The American Secretary of State, Robert Lansing, declared in a memorandum on September 20, 1918, that in consequence of the dissolution of the Hapsburg empire, which was to be expected, the United States wanted to see Austria reduced to her ancient boundaries and incorporated in the German Federation of States, so that Austria could have an outlet to the sea, in the same way as Baden and Saxony, through German ports on the North Sea and the Baltic. Lloyd George's attitude was similar. It was, however, Clemenceau who insisted on the prohibition of the *Anschluss*, because he dreaded the re-emergence of the "German danger". He wished to see Germany reduced, and not compensated by Austria for her losses of Alsace-Lorraine and Prussian Poland. "France took the line (in the Peace Conference) that Austria must remain separated from Germany", recorded Clemenceau's most intimate collaborator, André Tardieu, in his memoirs, *La Paix*. "Great Britain and the United States were undecided and discussed this question for three months." In a speech which Tardieu made in the French Chamber on July 25, 1920, he asserted that Clemenceau had finally obtained Great Britain's consent to the prohibition of the *Anschluss* in June 1919 in exchange for the cession of French oil-fields in Persia.

The victorious Powers declared the German Austrians responsible for the war; they treated them, accordingly, as defeated enemies whose wishes could be disregarded.

It should, however, be recalled that the war was instigated not by the German-Austrian people, but by the Hapsburg Government which ruled an empire of eleven nations. If the common people were held to be responsible for the actions of their government, then all the eleven nations of the Hapsburg Empire, and not the German Austrians alone, would have appeared to be equally responsible. None of the eleven nations, in fact, wanted the war (the Hapsburg Government declared

<sup>1</sup> The Peace Conference, denying the right of self-determination to the Austrian people, even denied them the right to choose the name of their own State. Austria's official name was, according to the Act of Constitution of November 12, 1918, German-Austria (*Deutsch-Oesterreich*). This name was proscribed by the Peace Treaty and the Austrian Parliament was compelled to pass a law (on October 21, 1919), declaring that "German-Austria . . . is a democratic Republic under the name Austria".

war without consulting Parliament); yet every one of the eleven nations, caught unawares by a stupendous machine of coercion, intimidation and propaganda, did what was forced on them: they obeyed and fought. There were cases of active resistance among Czech soldiers and South-Slav sailors. There were similar cases, too, among German-Austrian Socialists and workers, the latter, in fact, being the more impressive. A German-Austrian Socialist—Friedrich Adler—killed the Austrian Prime Minister, Count Stürgkh, in October 1916; 700,000 German-Austrian ammunition workers of Vienna and Lower Austria rose in a big strike movement in January 1918, to enforce peace. There was, on the other hand, no such action, for instance, on the part of the Austrian Poles; they actually supported the Hapsburg and Hohenzollern war against Russia (then an ally of Britain and France) and formed a Legion of volunteers. Pilsudski, head of the Polish army under Austro-German command during the war, later became the leader of the Polish State, and his Finance Minister was Baron Bilinski, who, as the Hapsburgs' Finance Minister, attended the Crown Council which plotted the world war; he was one of those conspirators against the peace of the world who had hotly insisted on the ultimatum to Serbia.

But Clemenceau did not indict the Polish Austrians, because he wanted the Poles as allies in his system of security; he indicted the German Austrians, because he needed a strong Czechoslovakia for his system of security, and had therefore to satisfy the Czech demand for the German Sudetenland; he above all indicted the German Austrians because he wanted to deprive them of their right of self-determination, in order to prevent them from joining Germany.

Lloyd George, in his memorandum of March 25, 1919, to the Peace Conference, warned the victorious Powers against putting "more Germans than were absolutely necessary" under Czech rule. Yet no less than a third of the German-Austrian population was forcibly included in the Czech State.<sup>1</sup> Lloyd George pleaded for peace terms in accordance with the principle of justice and fairness, which the Allies had proclaimed during the war. "Our terms", he wrote, "may be hard, stern, and even crushing, and may yet appear so just that the people on whom they are imposed will be forced to feel their justice and admit it." The German-Austrian people,

<sup>1</sup> There were 6,291,000 Czechs and 3,513,000 Germans in Czechoslovakia, in 1919.

deprived of their right of self-determination, felt bitterly wronged.

In the light of subsequent history it appears that the forcible incorporation of the Sudeten Germans into Czechoslovakia and the prohibition of the *Anschluss* were the most fateful errors of the peace settlement of 1919.

The Czechoslovak State, as it emerged from the ruins of the multi-national Hapsburg State, retained precisely the multi-national structure of the latter; it included millions of Germans, Hungarians and Ruthenians. Though it undoubtedly did its best, it was no more able to satisfy its "national minorities" (particularly the Germans) than the Hapsburg State was able to satisfy the Czechs. Czechoslovakia, in fact, replaced the Hapsburg State as the danger-spot of Europe. In order finally to solve the problem of her national minorities, she resorted to the most fearful measures after the Second World War: she expelled millions of Germans and Hungarians, men, women and children, from the land of their ancestors.

The prohibition of the *Anschluss* had still more serious implications; it was perhaps one of the major causes which produced the disaster of the Second World War.

France emerged from the war as a victor who, in fact, could never afford to fight again. She had lost so much of her strength that she was already weaker than the Germany she had defeated. But she was then still in a position to take the lead in organising Europe in co-operation with the new Germany. She chose, however, to organise Europe against Germany. She attempted to seek a system of security in Europe which, by force of the logic of geography and economy, was bound to collapse. Instead of aiming at a durable agreement with republican Germany, France attempted to ring in Germany by a number of satellite States: Czechoslovakia, Poland and Rumania. She thus fostered, by her hostile attitude towards the German Republic, the chauvinist, militarist and fascist trends in German public life.

So long as Germany was pacific—that is, so long as democracy in Germany prevailed—France's system of alliances in Eastern Europe had no practical meaning. When Germany became once more militarist, France's allies in Eastern Europe, economically dependent on Germany, were forced to accept Germany's supremacy, or were, as in the case of Czechoslovakia, forsaken by France herself.

France's security was, in fact, determined by the political

structure of Germany. A democratic and nationally satisfied Germany would never have embarked on aggressive adventures; for, owing to the social structure of Germany—a country in which three-fifths of the population belong to the industrial working class—democracy in Germany secures to the working class, pacific by tradition and interest, a decisive influence upon the affairs of State. The urge to self-preservation, if wisely understood, would have demanded from France a policy designed to reduce the legitimate grievances of a defeated Germany to an unavoidable minimum, as Lloyd George had suggested, and to strengthen her democratic forces. However, by denying national unity to the German people, France fostered the German grievances, and furthermore deprived the democratic and anti-militarist forces in Germany of the powerful support which they would have obtained if the Austrian people had been permitted to join Germany. The Austrian people, Catholic and Socialist, are at any rate no nationalists, for reasons which we have already attempted to explain. In joining Germany, they would have strengthened the Catholic Centre Party and the Social Democratic Party, the very parties which stood genuinely and firmly for pacifism and democracy. (Because the Right in Germany dreaded reinforcement of the Left by the *Anschluss*, it was by no means delighted with the prospect of the *Anschluss*; in fact it did not desire it, and did everything to discourage the German Austrians when they contemplated producing a *fait accompli* by joining Germany before the beginning of the Peace Conference.)

The *Anschluss* would also have greatly alleviated the economic distress on which Nazism fattened. We know how chains of coincidences brought about the rise of Nazism; we know how its influence upon the minds of the people\*increased when the numbers of unemployed, the bankruptcy of the farmers and the small business men increased, and how abruptly it declined when the fury of the economic crisis abated. It is, to say the least, very doubtful whether Hitler would ever have assumed power in a united Germany in which the Austrian people had a part to play.

The Peace Treaties of 1919, by solving none of the old, and creating a number of new problems, perpetuated, and even accentuated, the antagonisms upon which Europe had foundered in 1914. On the most important crossroads of Europe they created a country with the seed of death in its heart.

## CHAPTER THREE

### THE SHAPING OF THE NEW STATE

AUSTRIA, MUTILATED and humiliated, started its life amidst a welter of misery, starvation and social chaos. With the sudden collapse of the Hapsburg empire, its administrative machine broke down. Sudden economic disruption brought its economic activity to a standstill and, with the sudden dissolution of its army, hundreds of thousands of disorganized soldiers streamed straight from the front to the homeland. There was no food. Austria was never able to feed her population from her own resources. The blockade, which the Allies upheld even after the Armistice, was reinforced by the blockade of the newly formed nation-States from which food had come hitherto. There was no work, because there was no coal and no raw material. Vienna became over-night a huge city of starving and freezing beggars.

This state of things was, however, not an ephemeral occurrence; it lasted for years (in spite of the lifting of the blockade of the Great Powers in March 1919, and of the granting of an Allied relief credit). The increase of the price of the dollar (with which Austria had to buy food, coal and raw material from abroad) indicates the economic plight of the country.

The price of the dollar in Vienna was as follows:

January 1919	16 Austrian crowns
January 1920	177    "    "
January 1921	664    "    "
August 1922	83,000    "    "

The increase in the cost of living was as follows:

July 1914	.	.	.	.	1
July 1921	.	.	.	.	100
October 1921	.	.	.	.	190
January 1922	.	.	.	.	664
July 1922	.	.	.	.	2,645

The Austrian Prime Minister told the League of Nations on



September 6, 1922, that a loaf of bread, which in 1914 cost half an Austrian crown, was now sold for 6,000 crowns. A kilogram of coal from Czechoslovakia a year ago cost eight crowns; now it cost 400. A shirt, which before the war could be bought for six crowns, now cost 200,000.

"Austria was undoubtedly one of the countries in Europe which seemed nearest to ruin," recorded the Financial Council of the League of Nations (in its Report, dated September 1924). "The State had no proper budget. All that could be said was that only one-third of the total expenditure seemed covered by normal revenue. The remaining funds required by the treasury were obtained from the printing press of the bank of issue. Between January and August 1922, the currency fell from one-thousandth of its pre-war value to one-fifteen thousandth."

Such was the economic state of Austria even four years after the Armistice.

Amidst this universal distress the people in the towns looked to the Social Democratic Party as their saviour. With the collapse of the Hapsburgs, the traditional moral authorities had also collapsed. The Catholic Church, which had been the main pillar of the *ancien régime*, was utterly discredited; the historical middle-class parties, formerly associated partly with the Church, partly with the nationalist-imperialist parties in Germany, were compromised. There was only one cohesive, uncompromising moral force left: the Social Democratic Party. It was the only party which remained untainted by any responsibility for the war and which gave mankind a new vision. It emerged from the general election of the National Assembly, in February 1919—the first which took place—as the strongest single party; out of 156 seats it obtained 69, as compared with the Christian Social Party's 63 seats, the Pan-German Party's 18 seats and the *Landbund's* (a party of non-Clerical farmers) 6 seats. The Communists were unable to secure a single seat, either in this election or in a later one.

But the political power which the Social Democratic Party wielded was far stronger than the arithmetic of the election results would indicate. With the disappearance of the emperor the real power relations between the classes had entirely changed, because the instruments of his power had withered away. The guns were now in the hands of the workers only, as organised in the *Volkswehr* (a people's militia). And the workers, unemployed, starving and freezing, were in a desper-

ate mood. They were profoundly impressed by the Bolshevik revolution in Russia, and strongly tempted to join the Bolshevik revolution in Hungary. They would listen to none but the Socialists.

Thus the lead of the State during the two formative years of the Republic fell naturally to the Social Democratic Party. But as a genuine democratic party it coalesced with the Christian Social Party, since it did not command a majority in Parliament.

This coalition lasted for two years, until October 1920. It gave to the Republic a modern democratic Constitution; it created a most progressive system of social legislation; it, finally, laid the legal foundation for the system of municipal Socialism which won fame throughout the world as the "achievements of Red Vienna".

### *The Constitution of the Republic*

The framing of the Constitution of the Republic, though most important in itself, was the least of the urgent problems with which the National Assembly was confronted, in view of the tremendous economic difficulties with which the country was beset. It was adopted in 1920, and amended in 1929.

The Austrian Constitution represents a compromise between centralism and federalism. The country is composed of nine provinces (*Länder*),<sup>1</sup> of which every one with the exception of the Burgenland had age-old traditions of its own. Salzburg, for example, was until 1803 an independent ecclesiastical duchy, and the Tyrol was ceded, after 1805, to the King of Bavaria (it was recovered by the Hapsburgs in 1815). The Austria provinces were more or less "historical individualities", to use a favoured term of the old Austrian political literature. The Constitution endeavoured to reconcile the aim of provincial self-government with the needs of centralisation.

The Constitution accordingly divided the legislative power between the provincial Diets and the National Council (*Nationalrat*), composed of 165 members, who were directly elected by universal franchise (every male and female citizen over 21 years of age). There was also a Federal Council (*Bundesrat*), composed of 46 delegates from the provincial Diets, the members of which were also elected by universal

<sup>1</sup> These nine provinces of Austria are the following: Vienna, Lower Austria, Upper Austria, Salzburg, the Tyrol, Vorarlberg, Styria, Carinthia and the Burgenland.

franchise. An ample latitude of self-government was left to the provincial Diets. They were entitled to impose certain taxes, they were in charge of housing policy, public work, social welfare and the health services, they supervised the municipalities, they controlled the schools and certain departments of the police, and they were able to influence through the Federal Council the policy of the State.

The legislative power in all matters which concerned the whole of the country—such as army, social legislation, foreign affairs, trade policy and currency—rested with the National Council (the Federal Council had only an advisory function). The government, appointed by the Federal President, was responsible to the National Council only. The Federal President was, however, elected for a term lasting four years by a National Assembly, composed of both chambers. The stability of the Constitution was secured by the provision that its alteration required a two-thirds majority of the National Council. A Supreme Court, the judges of which were elected by the National Council, was empowered to impeach the Federal President and the Ministers for any breach of the Constitution, and to examine the constitutional validity of the laws passed by the legislative bodies of the Republic.

The inclusion of a federal element in the Austrian Constitution had far-reaching consequences: it enabled the creation of "Red Vienna" amidst a "black country"; for in most of the provinces the majority of the people were reactionary and Clerical.

Until the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire, Vienna was its capital and, at the same time, the provincial capital of Lower Austria; it was not a *Land*, nor a "historical entity", though its spiritual life towered far above that of the provinces.

In framing the Constitution of the Republic the Socialists insisted on the elevation of Vienna from a mere municipality to a *Land*, represented by a Diet and a provincial government, and endowed with the same autonomous and fiscal rights as all the provinces of the country enjoyed. Vienna was now separated from Lower Austria, and while it remained the capital of the Republic and retained the privileges of a city, it attained at the same time the rights of a *Land*. Since Vienna housed three-tenths of the total population of the Republic and most of the wealth and of the industrial resources left in the country, its Socialist administration, resting on a two-thirds majority, was able to embark on a great scheme of Socialist reconstruction.

### *The Social Legislation of the Republic*

The pressing need to counteract the distress of the industrial workers dwarfed, however, the importance of the deliberations on the Constitution.

The industrial districts of Austria, and in particular Vienna, were flooded immediately after the war with unemployed and demobilised soldiers who were unable to obtain work. The first task the Socialist Minister of Labour had to tackle was the organisation of the labour market.

Until November 1918 the social legislation of old Austria was confined to certain laws designed to protect the health of the workers in a few industries, to prevent the industrial exploitation of children under sixteen years of age, and to limit the working-time in the coal mines to eleven hours per day; it also provided a system of compulsory insurance for industrial workers against sickness and disablement. There was, of course, no insurance against unemployment, nor were there Labour Exchanges.

Ferdinand Hanusch, the Socialist Minister of Labour, as early as November 4, 1918, first organised Labour Exchanges and introduced national unemployment insurance. As there were no funds available, and unemployment was so widely spread, for a long time allowances had to come almost entirely from the Treasury. A month afterwards he introduced the eight-hour day, a law which was amplified and made universally valid by the Eight-Hour Act of December 17, 1919.

The greatest novelty in social legislation at this time was, however, the promulgation of the Act of July 30, 1919, concerning paid holidays. It secured for every industrial worker the benefit of an annual paid holiday of one or two weeks, according to the length of his employment; young workers and apprentices up to the age of eighteen were entitled to four weeks paid holiday, regardless of the length of their employment.

Other social laws adopted by Parliament attempted to improve the conditions of workers in particular trades: there was a law dealing with working conditions and a seven-hour shift for the miners; another law restricted night work in bakeries; a special law dealt with working conditions of hotel and restaurant personnel; another law restricted working hours of domestic servants; a law concerning the working conditions of the clerical workers and shop assistants limited their working hours and secured them compensation in the event of dismissal.

A special law provided for paid leave during some weeks before and after child-birth, and prohibited the employment of women and adolescents on night work.

A social law of great importance was the Act concerning Shop Stewards, passed on May 15, 1919. The institution of shop stewards was born out of the Russian Revolution of 1905. During the movement of mass strikes which preceded the revolution the workers in the big factories formed Workers' Councils (Soviets) to direct the strikes and to mobilise the masses for the political struggle against Tsarism. These Workers' Councils rapidly assumed the leadership of the revolution and became its driving force. In the Russian Revolution of 1917 Workers' Councils again sprang up from the factories, combining with the Soldiers' and Sailors' Councils elected in the barracks, and carried the revolution to its triumph. From the first it was the Bolsheviks' idea to base the power of the State entirely on the Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Councils, and to use them as instruments for transforming the Tsarist to a Socialist society.

Since the Russian Revolution the workers of Eastern and Central Europe had welcomed the Workers' Councils as a revolutionary symbol. So when the Austrian workers rose in a revolutionary strike movement during the war, they at once formed Workers' Councils—a process which continued also after the collapse of the Hapsburg State.

The Workers' Councils were designed to serve the revolutionary transformation of society at a time of revolutionary tension, and as an instrument of industrial democracy after the revolutionary impetus had spent its force.

The Workers' Councils, born in the tempest of the revolution, were, however, not legal institutions recognised by the State and the employers; they acted *de facto*, but not *de jure*. By the Act of May 15, 1919, the National Assembly legalised the institution of shop stewards in every undertaking with more than five employees. Without enumerating the special rights and duties of shop stewards, the Act simply stated that they had to serve the "economic, social and cultural interests" of the employees.

While shop stewards were able to exert some influence upon the management of the factories, they had, of course, no influence upon the management of labour affairs by the State. There was no constitutional body in existence which was legally entitled to represent the special interests of Labour to

the Government. There were trade unions; but from a constitutional point of view they were not legal bodies.

But in old Austria there were some trades with a privileged representation in special "Chambers", such as the merchants and industrialists, the farmers, doctors and lawyers. The National Assembly now established a "Labour Chamber" (*Arbeiterkammer*), composed of delegates elected by the workers by secret ballot in the factories, by shop assistants in stores, and by clerical workers in offices. The Labour Chamber had advisory functions concerning social legislation. The Government had to consult the Labour Chamber on every Bill which touched interests before submitting it to Parliament.

A legal body had thus been created through which the workers were able to influence directly the social activity of the State.

The Labour Chamber soon extended its activities, particularly in the field of workers' education. It also established an institute of economic and social research, and created one of the finest libraries on social science in Europe.

The legal institution of both shop stewards and a Labour Chamber, so far from undermining the trade unions, as had been feared, enhanced their position in the factories and the State. The shop stewards and the delegates to the Labour Chamber collaborated very closely with the trade unions, and fostered the interest of the individual worker in trade union activities and in social affairs.

This system of social legislation was built up during the first two years of the Republic's existence. It was the fruit of Socialist participation in a government under Socialist leadership. When the Socialists left the Government, social legislation ceased. And when Dollfuss by a Fascist *coup d'état* destroyed democracy in Austria, a number of social laws were abolished or suspended.

### *"Red Vienna"*

The crowning achievements of the Austrian Republic belonged to the municipality of Vienna. The Austrian workers proudly called it "Red Vienna".

Vienna was indeed a "red city", because two-thirds of its electorate invariably polled Socialist in every election; it was a "red city" because no fewer than 400,000 adults of the Viennese people were members of the Social Democratic Party; it was,

above all, a "red city" because it succeeded in realising municipal Socialism in a capitalist country.

When the Socialists took over the administration of Vienna the city was in a state of chaos. Its buildings and streets were dilapidated, half the tramways were dismantled and the other half almost useless, its population was half starved, tens of thousands were unemployed and the Treasury was nearly empty. The municipal servants had to be paid in instalments: the municipality was on the verge of bankruptcy. Vienna appeared to be a dying city beyond help.

The most urgent task with which the Socialist administration was confronted was the housing problem. The housing conditions of Vienna were appalling before the war. Of its 550,000 dwellings half were flats of no more than two rooms each, in which not infrequently two families lived. There were, of course, no bathrooms, often not even a water-tap or a lavatory to each flat; one tap and one lavatory on every floor had to serve its thirty or forty inmates. Vienna was famous for its beautiful Baroque palaces and the majestic splendour of its Ringstrasse; but it was also notorious for its slums.

Housing conditions had worsened during the war and its horrifying aftermath. No new houses had been built for almost nine years, and the old ones had not been repaired. Vienna was infested with vermin.

The Socialist municipality embarked, first of all, on a great housing scheme. It built large, well-designed blocks of flats in the suburbs of the city, and individual houses in their vicinity, the latter each with its own kitchen garden. The actual building of the housing blocks covered only 30 per cent of the ground; the remaining 70 per cent provided squares and gardens, often adorned with statuary. Every housing block contained a nursery, a health department and a library, shower-baths, common kitchens and laundries electrically equipped with washing, drying and ironing apparatus. Great care was taken that at least one room of each flat received direct sunlight and that it had, if possible, access to a balcony. The Socialist administration built about 65,000 such flats up to 1934, when Dollfuss crushed the Socialist movement and imprisoned the Mayor of Vienna, Karl Seitz; the discontinuation of the municipal building programme was immediately ordered.

The building of new flats was only part of the Socialist housing policy. The flats were built mainly for the working

people; the rent had therefore to be so low that the poor could afford it. The flats in the new municipal housing blocks were let practically for nothing; the tenant had to pay a small contribution to a fund designed for the upkeep of the house, and he had to pay a housing tax. He did not have to pay interest on the sum spent in buying the land and in building the houses, nor anything towards its repayment. The Socialists believed that the homes of men should not be a source of profit, and that it was the duty of the community to provide homes for all free of charge.

Since the municipal flats returned no interest, they could not be built on a loan basis.

Whence, then, came the money for buying the land and building the houses? It came from a special tax, called "Tax for the Building of Dwellings"; it was steeply graduated according to the size of the flats, and considerably increased by a super tax on luxurious apartments, palaces and villas.

The economic basis of this housing tax was a Rent Restriction Law, promulgated during the war and retained afterwards. This law prohibited the raising of rents. But as the value of the Austrian crown rapidly depreciated, the actual value of the rent lessened; the tenant paid, say, in 1923 only a minute fraction of the rent he had paid in 1913, though the amount of money was exactly the same. In 1913 the working-class tenant had to give away about a third of his income to the landlord; in 1923 scarcely 8 per cent, including the housing tax.

The Socialists fought for the continuance of this law, but they insisted that the money the tenant would have had to pay as rent to the private landlord should at least in part be paid as a house-building tax to the municipality. The moral idea of this policy was that those who were fortunate enough to live in a house should help to build homes for the less fortunate; and the more comfortable one's home was, the bigger should be one's contribution for the homeless. The housing tax was by no means insignificant, and yielded enough for the erection of flats at a rate of 6,000 a year.

The Rent Restriction Law, which kept down rents, depreciated at the same time the value of the old, vermin-infested houses and of building land. The Viennese municipality could thus buy them for one-tenth of what they cost before the war, and was able to reconstruct the city according to a well-devised architectural plan. By 1934 the municipality owned a very considerable part of the land and buildings of the city.



It achieved to a great extent the socialisation of the people's homes.

Next to the scheme for providing homes for the people, the municipality embarked on a great child-welfare scheme. Before the Social Democrats undertook their save-the-children campaign, Vienna had the highest rate of deaths from tuberculosis of any city of the world; tuberculosis was called in Europe the "Viennese disease". The aftermath of the war, from 1918 to 1923, had seen mortality increased by 60 per cent compared with 1913, and child mortality had doubled. A medical examination of 186,000 school children showed that only 6,732 among them were not under-nourished.

The care of the municipality for the child began already before it was born. In every district of Vienna mother-advice offices and pre-natal clinics were established for advice, help and use of pregnant women, and accommodation for both married and unmarried mothers was provided in hospitals. When the child was born, a municipal officer sent by the Mayor presented the mother with a complete outfit for the baby. Through the advice centres the mother obtained free medical attendance and benefits for several weeks after the birth of the child. Unemployed mothers received a supply of free milk for one year after their confinement. On the other hand, birth-control clinics were established in every district, and a campaign against venereal disease was conducted on the most modern lines.

Next came the welfare of the school children. They received meals at school, and were attended there by dentists. Tubercular children were sent to a sanatorium for tubercular cases in the mountains, and ailing children were taken to the lovely Château Wilhelminenberg, a former residence of one of the Austrian Archdukes.

The money for this scheme was again obtained by special taxes, on the principle that the more fortunate should assist the less fortunate. The tax for child welfare levied on entertainment and luxuries was determined by the idea that if one enjoyed the cinema or theatre, or could afford a car or horses, one should contribute one's share to make the life of the children a little healthier and gayer. The entertainment tax was graduated up to 33 per cent, and there was a graduated tax for the employment of more than one domestic servant. There were taxes on motor cars and riding horses, on luxury restaurants and hotels. The revenue from these taxes was

solely devoted to mother and child-welfare work, in accordance with the proclaimed maxim that every tax should be for a definite purpose, and that the taxpayer should know where every penny he paid was going.

This was a revolutionary novelty in the system of taxation. The municipal government of the privileged who had hitherto controlled Vienna had based the main burden of its expenditure on the poor; it derived its revenues almost exclusively from the profits of municipal utilities—drinking-water, electricity, gas, tramways—or from taxes on dwellings, meat and beer. Now the Viennese people had also to pay a tax on their dwellings; but the revenue from this tax was solely devoted to the building of new dwellings, and not to cover the general expenses of the administration. Taxes on meat, drinking-water and beer were abolished and no profit was derived from municipal utilities.

The Socialist administration of Vienna had inherited from its former administration by Karl Lueger a municipal transport system, gas works and power-stations. These enterprises were now greatly expanded. Big new power-stations were built in the Alps, hundreds of miles from Vienna, chemical plants were added to the gas-works, brick plants were erected; the municipality owned one of the biggest insurance companies in the country and a credit bank for artisans and small businessmen. It employed in its enterprises, offices, schools and hospitals more than 55,000 men and women.

Vienna, which had seemed irretrievably doomed in 1919, was ten years later one of the most remarkable cities of Europe. It had defied death, it had created new life. It had girdled itself with beautiful blocks of flats and garden settlements, with swimming-pools and libraries. Ten years before it had been on the verge of bankruptcy; now it could justly pride itself as financially one of the soundest cities on the Continent. It had increased its activities steadily, and though it was naturally not able to solve the permanent economic crisis inherent in this artificial State, it greatly stimulated Austria's economic life, and succeeded in reducing unemployment in the city to proportionately the lowest level of any of the industrial centres in the country. Above all, it had transformed the Socialist idea of common property, social taxation and social welfare into deeds, and had created among its citizens a new sense of solidarity and social responsibility.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE POLITICAL STRUCTURE OF THE REPUBLIC

THE HAPSBURG empire left to the new State not only a shattered economy, but also a tattered spiritual fabric. Austria consisted of a great and sophisticated city with a progressive population surrounded by a rather backward, politically reactionary peasantry. The intellectual antagonism between Vienna and the countryside was one of the main causes of the downfall of the first Austrian Republic.

It might appear as though the social structure of Austria had provided an ideal basis for permanent co-operation between the workers and peasants. The rural and urban population of the country was roughly evenly divided, and among the farmers the number of big capitalist landowners was insignificant. The large landed estates in Austria comprised about 15 per cent of the total cultivated area, and consisted mostly of mountainous forest land. Austria was a country of peasants with small or middle-sized holdings. Of some 433,000 holdings in the country, no fewer than 250,000 were under 5 hectares (1 hectare = 2.5 acres). The vast majority of the holdings were worked by peasant families, with perhaps the help of a few hands in the season.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As most of the soil in Austria is poor, farms up to 10 hectares are regarded as small peasant holdings; holdings of the size of 10 to 50 hectares are regarded as medium-sized peasant farms, and holdings over 100 hectares as estates. According to the statistics for 1930, the cultivated land in Austria was distributed as follows: small peasant holdings up to 10 hectares comprised 20 per cent, medium-sized peasant farms from 10 to 50 hectares 46 per cent, and estates over 100 hectares 26 per cent of the cultivated land. Thus two-thirds of the cultivated land were owned by peasants. Yet the proportion of cultivated land held by the peasants was in fact bigger than the figures indicate, as the large holdings of more than 100 hectares comprised only 8.8 per cent of the fields and meadows, the rest consisting of Alpine pastures, mostly of little fertility. The large estates over 200 hectares comprised only 6 per cent of cultivated land, but 57 per cent of woods, 54 per cent of uncultivated land (mountain pasture) and 93 per cent of unproductive land. Most of the large estates lay in the Burgenland, a former

More complicated was the social stratification of the urban population, especially that of Vienna. The dominating position of Vienna as the political and economic capital of the empire had produced a comparatively broad middle class; the presence there of the imperial Court had attracted the aristocratic upper class from all the provinces of the far-flung empire; the highly developed luxury trade in the hands of small artisans was the basis of a strong lower middle class. Yet the misery of the war, the economic dislocation at the end of the war, and the depreciation of the currency in the aftermath of the war had greatly impoverished all of them. From this misery, however, a new middle class had emerged—the *nouveau riche*, more greedy, more narrow-minded and more ruthless than the old. But as the Austrian Republic was able to retain merely a fragment of the total economic mechanism of the Austro-Hungarian empire, the political power of the middle classes had been considerably cramped.

The middle class in the provincial cities and towns was always weak in numbers, for most of those towns were small provincial administrative, trading and tourist centres with very little large-scale industry.<sup>1</sup>

This social structure elevated the working class as well as the peasant class to a dominating political position in the State. The co-operation between these two classes was therefore the indispensable precondition for social equilibrium. They were roughly equal in numerical strength; their spheres of political influence were not merely divided between the towns and countryside, but also geographically between the eastern half of Austria, where her industrial activity centred, and the western half, with an agricultural preponderance. The real economic interests of both classes on the whole also ran parallel. The prosperity of the cattle-breeding and dairy-farming peasants depended on the purchasing power of the towns, and especially on the large working population of Vienna; conversely, the extent of industrial activity depended to a certain degree on the purchasing power of the villages. Furthermore, neither the working class nor the peasant

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province of Hungary which was attached to Austria after the war; there Hungarian aristocrats owned 154,728 hectares—that is, 45 per cent of the soil of the province.

<sup>1</sup> Of the provincial cities only two (Graz with 102,000 people and Linz with 152,000) had a population of more than 100,000; the rest had even less than 50,000, save Innsbruck (56,000).

class was able to govern the country alone, unless they allied themselves with the middle class, whose economic interests were in contradiction to their own.

Yet the political relations between these two classes were marked by extreme hostility from start to finish. They co-operated with each other only during the first two years of the Republic, and even then by no means in a spirit of cordiality. For the ensuing fourteen years that the Republic was allowed to live there was no co-operation, but only grim struggle and mutual hatred. This implacable hatred did not, of course, extend to the individual members of these two classes. It was directed against the conflicting ideologies which the parties representing them embodied. And it appeared as if that gulf could never be bridged.

### *The Political Parties in the Republic*

The political stage of the Austrian Republic was dominated by two parties; by the Christian-Social Party, comprising mainly the peasants, and the Social Democratic Party, comprising mainly the industrial workers; both these parties had also a strong following among the lower middle class. The members of the upper middle class—industrialists, merchants, the members of the higher ranks of the Civil Service and of the professional classes—were divided in their party allegiance. One section of them adhered to the Pan-German Party,<sup>1</sup> another section, stronger than the first and consisting of most of the industrialists, big traders and bankers, supported and even greatly influenced the Christian-Social Party; a tiny fraction of the middle class—some intellectuals and professionals—supported the Social Democratic Party. So, apart from the Pan-German Party, which always remained small, the middle class in Austria had no political party of its own.

Austria was also one of the very few countries of Central and Western Europe which had no middle-class Liberalism;

<sup>1</sup> The German name of that Party is *Grossdeutsche Volkspartei*; its correct translation is People's Party of Greater Germany, indicating that it stood for the union of Austria with Germany in a Greater Germany. In English political literature the protagonists of Austria's union with Germany are (incorrectly) called Pan-Germans. It is necessary to point out that they are not identical with the followers of the imperialist Pan-German Party (*Alldutsche Partei*), which, in the reign of Wilhelm II, aimed at German hegemony over Europe. The Austrian Social Democrats stood for union with Germany—that is, for a Greater Germany, but they were certainly not imperialist Pan-Germans (*Alldutsche*).

both the parties backed by the upper middle class were, in fact, avowedly anti-Liberal.

This is a most astonishing phenomenon, because there was once a Liberal-minded middle class in Austria. It had had its heroic past when it led the revolution in 1848; it even governed Austria with one short break from 1867 until 1879, and it was due to it that the main principles of Liberalism were incorporated into the Constitution of old Austria. Whilst declining as a party, there was at any rate a remnant of Austrian Liberalism until the end of the Monarchy. But with the disappearance of the Monarchy it, too, simply disappeared, and from 1919 on there was no discernible trace of it.

How is this phenomenon to be explained?

In the first place, because the Austrian middle class was liberal merely in its youth; as it came of age, while retaining its anti-Clerical tenet, it became (with the exception of a weak wing which later formed the Democratic Party and also disappeared with the Liberals) a narrow-minded, social reactionary, purely capitalist party, associated with banking interests and big business. It never attempted to appeal to the masses of the working people. It was never guided, like English Liberalism, by a sense of social responsibility. Because English Liberalism, at any rate its radical wing, was at one time the champion of the working class, it was able to attract the sympathy of the workers. But the Austrian Liberals never cared for the sympathy of the common men; they stubbornly defended profit interests against attempts at social reforms, their political privileges against the demand for political equality raised by the workers. English Liberalism was able to retain its grip on British Labour until the eve of the twentieth century; only then did British Labour become politically independent of the Liberals, and formed its own party. The Austrian workers, who had always been treated as inferior by the Liberals, formed a party of their own as early as the 'sixties.

In most Western European countries—for example, Great Britain, France and Germany—capitalist-Liberal parties were at least able to keep the lower middle class within their fold, because the lower middle class itself was impregnated with the spirit of capitalism. Austrian Liberalism failed also in this respect, owing to peculiar historic conditions. For in Austria the rise of capitalism had engendered a class antagonism between the upper and the lower middle classes which had all the appearance of a "race" antagonism.

## *The Jewish Element in Austria's Political Structure*

Old Austria was an aristocratic, bureaucratic and Clerical structure. Capitalism therefore grew there not from within, as for instance in England and Germany, but was grafted on from outside, as in Russia or in Spain. The big Jewish money-lenders of the Hapsburg Court built the Austrian railways and brought Austrian industry and trade into being on a grand scale (in the 'sixties and 'seventies).<sup>1</sup> Capitalism was introduced into Austria mainly, though not exclusively, by Jews. Although they were Austrian Jews, belonging just to one of the many nations (or religious "denominations") of the Hapsburg empire, they were considered by the others as strangers. And although an indigenous Gentile capitalist class also developed—first among the German Austrians, later among the Czechs—it was "the Jews" who appeared to embody capitalism in its undisguised rapacity and corruption.<sup>2</sup>

The Jews in old Austria—2,300,000 in number—were, in fact, the paupers of the Monarchy. In Galicia and Bukovina, where they lived in confined quarters and comprised 11 per cent of the population, they made up more than one-half of the total numbers of the inhabitants without regular employment. Jewish workmen who before the war of 1914 earned as much as 14s. a week were considered fortunate. Their appalling poverty drove them overseas in masses. It had been estimated that between 1881 and 1908 more than 300,000 Jews emigrated from the Hapsburg empire to the United States and

<sup>1</sup> The Austrian aristocracy participated to a great extent in the profits, though not in the management, of business. In 1873, thirteen princes, sixty-five counts, twenty-nine barons and twenty-one other nobles were members of the boards of the Austrian railways, one duke, twenty-four counts and sixteen other nobles were members of the boards of the Austrian banks, and one prince, sixteen counts, and eight other nobles were counted in the boards of newly launched large-scale industrial enterprises in Vienna.

<sup>2</sup> The history of the rise of modern capitalism in Austria was, indeed, a history of wild speculations, insolent fraud and shameless corruption, as indicated by the exorbitant profits the banks and joint-stock companies were able to record. For example, the *Wiener Bankverein*, one of the big Austrian banking houses, paid its shareholders 27 per cent dividends in 1870, 40 per cent dividends in 1871, and 80 per cent dividends in 1872. The average profits of the joint-stock companies from 1867 until 1873 were 14 to 22 per cent of the capital invested. The sum invested during the three years from 1871 until 1873 amounted to about 334,000,000 pound sterling. The "normal" profit rate is indicated by dividends paid by the joint-stock companies of Austria in the prosperous years before the war of 1914; they were 8.53 per cent in 1908 and rose slowly to 9.51 per cent in 1912.

England, and the American immigration statistics showed that the poorest of the emigrants entering the United States were Jews. The regulations in those days that immigrants must be in possession on arrival of a minimum sum of 25 dollars excluded thousands of Jews annually—in 1911, for instance, 14,500 were sent back to Europe from New York alone. The average amount possessed by Jewish immigrants was only 8.7 dollars, as compared with 41.5 dollars possessed by Scottish and 37.6 by Japanese immigrants.

A fraction of the Jewish emigrants went from Galicia and Bukovina to Vienna. Their number was not large. In 1860 only 6,000 Jews lived in Vienna, a little more than 2 per cent of its population. These numbers rose to about 200,000 in the course of six decades. But still the proportion of the Jewish section of the total population of the Austrian Republic did not exceed 3.5 per cent. Yet, since they were not dispersed all over the country, but lived mainly in Vienna, one-tenth of the Viennese inhabitants were Jews.

In Vienna the Jews, by their ingenuity, thriftiness, assiduity and intelligence, gained an immense prominence in nearly every walk of life. Their natural talents, stunted in the mediaeval atmosphere of the ghetto in which they had lived hitherto, blossomed in the free atmosphere of the great cosmopolis. They assimilated Western civilisation at an amazing speed, and soon became distinguished in letters, music, medicine, history, science and the theatre; they greatly enriched Austria's cultural life. But they also became notable in Austria's economic life. Comparatively few of them controlled big banks and big business or dominated the Stock Exchange. But because the names of these few were well known—names which symbolised power and wealth—it became easy to identify the few with the many who had neither power nor wealth.

Viennese Jews had been in the vanguard of Austrian Liberalism; although in 1848 there were scarcely more than 2,000 of them in Vienna, they were among the prominent leaders and martyrs of the revolution. When Liberalism betrayed the creed of its youth and became the political ideology of capitalism, many Jews turned to the Socialist movement; among the most honoured names in its history are those of Jews. But to all appearance Liberalism seemed still to be exclusively a "Jewish affair", because it was so intimately associated with big business which seemed to be "Jewish", and was backed by most



influential papers which were actually owned and edited by Jews.

The workers, organised in the Social Democratic Party, clearly understood the true nature of capitalism to be an economic and social, and not a racial or religious phenomenon; they combated Liberalism—the organised political expression of capitalism—with the conception of democratic Socialism.

The lower middle class, imbued with an equal hatred of Liberalism as the party of big capitalism, fought it, not with the idea of Socialism—because they themselves adhered to the conception of capitalist free enterprise—but with a twofold conception of anti-Semitism: on the one hand the racial anti-Semitism of the Pan-Germans, on the other the religious anti-Semitism of the Christian-Social Party.

### *Anti-Semitism in Austria's Political Structure*

For nearly forty years—from the 'eighties until the forming of the Republic in 1918—anti-Semitism was the key-note of political life in the German-speaking territories of Austria, especially in Vienna.<sup>1</sup> It is by no means a strange coincidence that Hitler came from Austria. Vienna, where Hitler received the strongest impressions of his youth, was the cradle of that brutal anti-Semitism which he, without adding anything to its ideology or phraseology, merely executed by the gradual disgrace, outlawing, plunder and final extermination of 6,000,000 Jewish men, women and children. What he did was implied in the gospel of hatred to which he listened when he was in Vienna: it was then preached with as much wit as coarseness by Karl Lueger, the leader of the Christian-Social Party, and with a pompous air of conviction blended with gross malice by Georg von Schönerer, the leader of the German-Nationalist Party. In Vienna, Hitler became imbued with this hatred, and there he learned, too, the infernal technique of the vulgarity in racial hate propaganda. Streicher's notorious paper *Der Stürmer* had its worthy predecessor in the Viennese

<sup>1</sup> The anti-Semitic movement attracted with irresistible force the great masses of the Viennese people. As early as 1895 it already embraced the majority of Vienna's population. In this year Lueger captured the Town Hall of the city with a majority of ninety-one seats against forty-six Liberal seats, and at the general election to Parliament in 1897 the anti-Semites gained 117,000 votes as compared with the 88,000 votes of the Social Democrats and 10,000 votes of the Liberals, under universal suffrage in the fifth curia.

Christian-Social paper, *Kikiriki*, and Hitler's National Socialist Workers Party was, in its conception, aim, and even name, precisely fashioned after Schönerer's "workers" party.

Why, then, was it that Austria, and particularly Vienna, became the centre of European anti-Semitism?

In the first place, because the rise of capitalism in Austria was to a greater extent than in other capitalist countries due to Jewish activity. Anti-Semitism on the part of the Viennese lower middle class was, in the first place, aroused by the competition of wretchedly poor Jewish pedlars and small middlemen and, secondly, by the competition of big stores, frequently owned by Jews; then there was the small artisan whose trade was ruined by the competition of large-scale modern industry, and the small business-man who became tributary to the bank. All who suffered from the inroads of capitalism let themselves be willingly persuaded that capitalism was a Jewish invention. Anti-Semitism on the part of the Viennese lower middle class was an expression of revolt by the economically weak against crushing competition from the economically strong. They believed that were it possible to drive out the Jews, capitalism too would disappear. The anti-Semitic creed of the lower middle class was, as August Bebel once said, "the Socialism of the fool".

In the countryside peasant anti-Semitism was roused by the fall in prices of wheat on the world market, caused by the competition of cheap Canadian wheat in the 'eighties and 'nineties. The peasants, of course, did not understand the complicated mechanism of price formation and the world-wide maze of interdependence of prices; they ascribed the fall in price of Austrian corn to speculations on the Viennese Corn Exchange, dominated by Jewish corn traders; therefore they hated the Jews.

These were, broadly speaking, the economic sources of anti-Semitism. The resentment and hatred which a rising capitalism produced among its victims became all-pervading when it was politically exploited and organized in political movements.

Three powerful groups of Austrian society adopted anti-Semitism as a main tenet: the German Nationalist Party, the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church, and the Christian-Social Party, which later became the political organisation of the Church. All of them fought Liberalism, which, though its government in the State had been overthrown in 1879, had retained the government of Vienna; all of them fought

Socialism, which with the rise of the working class became a weighty political and ideological force; and all of them, after some hesitation and long contemplation, deliberately chose anti-Semitic hatred as the most effective means of mass deception for combating Liberalism and Socialism at the same time. The Church, for dogmatic reasons, withstood that cheap temptation longest,<sup>1</sup> nor were Georg von Schönerer and Karl Lueger anti-Semites at the beginning of their political careers. Schönerer collaborated with prominent Jews in drafting the programme of his German-Nationalist Party, and Karl Lueger was first a Liberal, then a Democrat, before he became a Christian anti-Semite.

It was Schönerer who introduced anti-Semitism as a political movement into Austria. He aspired to the unification of German-Austria with Germany; he regarded Germany as his fatherland and the Hohenzollern Kaiser as his emperor. His spiritual attitude was greatly determined by German trends of thought, and was most impressed by the attempts of the Prussian Court Chaplain Stöcker to alienate the workers from Socialism by means of anti-Semitism. Stöcker failed, and his propaganda ceased; yet Schönerer believed that he could succeed in combating humanitarian international Socialism with a conception of anti-Semitic national Socialism.

In his fight for a Greater Germany, Georg von Schönerer was opposed by the Liberals as well as the Catholic Church.

The Liberals, representing the German-Austrian middle classes, while struggling for the retention of the German supremacy in the Hapsburg realm, abhorred the idea of its dissolution, for their economic destiny was strongly linked with the destiny of this vast economic unit. They were German nationalists at home, but they did not desire the incorporation of Austria into Germany. Schönerer believed that the best stick with which to beat the Liberals, as well as the Socialists, was anti-Semitism.

But Schönerer also had to challenge the Roman Catholic Church, which he rightly considered to be the most formidable obstacle to a Greater Germany. Austrian Catholicism was,

<sup>1</sup> In 1894 the Austrian episcopate, in a pastoral letter, condemned anti-Semitism as incompatible with the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; but in face of the anti-Semitic avalanche in Vienna, the Vatican deemed it expedient to yield to it. Two years after the issue of the Austrian pastoral letter the Pope bestowed his holy blessings upon Karl Lueger, and the Secretary of State of the Papal Court, Cardinal Rampolla, welcomed Lueger as a powerful ally against Liberalism and Socialism.

indeed, the mainstay of the Hapsburg Monarchy, and its grip upon the lower middle class in the towns and the peasants in the countryside was very powerful. Schönerer attempted to crush this grip by a frontal attack on the Church; under the slogan: "Break with Rome!" ("*Los von Rom!*"), he embarked on a fierce campaign for mass-conversion to the Protestant Church. He failed, defeated by Karl Lueger's Christian-Social Party.

Lueger, with a superior sense of mass psychology, perceived that anti-Semitism might win the sympathy of the lower middle class and of the peasants, but that anti-Clericalism would antagonize both of them. He came to the conclusion that he could win both of them only in alliance with Catholicism. He consequently decided to fight for power with an ideology combining anti-Semitism with Clericalism, in order to obtain the support both of the people and of the Church. He also embroidered his Christian anti-Semitism with Austrian patriotism, in order to win the sympathy of the Court. Thus armed, he challenged Liberalism, Socialism and Schönerer's pan-Germanism. Schönerer had based his programme on the ideology of Pan-Germanism, racial anti-Semitism, anti-Catholicism and paganism.<sup>1</sup> Lueger combated it with a programme based on the ideology of Christian anti-Semitism, Catholicism and Austrian patriotism. On this platform he rallied first the lower middle class of Vienna, later the peasants of the villages and, finally, after surmounting its traditional suspicion of mass movements, also the Catholic Church. With this combined force, organized in the Christian-Social Party, he routed the Pan-Germanists, defeated the Liberals and conquered (in 1894) their main fortress, the Town Hall of Vienna. Christian anti-Semitism had prevailed over racial anti-Semitism (confined now to University students and the professional classes); but it had lost nothing of its venom.

### *The Christian-Social Party*

The Christian-Social Party was all-powerful in Vienna from 1894 until the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire in 1918. Its architect and leader, Karl Lueger, became Mayor of the city and dominated it with his forceful personality for more than

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that Germanic paganism which formed part of the National Socialist ideology was for the first time introduced to a political movement by Schönerer.

fifteen years until his death in 1910. He wrested the Viennese tramways and the gas works from "Jewish capitalism" and put them under municipal control; he added to the property of the municipality the electrical power of the city; he embellished the city with many public buildings, schools and gardens. He was undoubtedly one of the great Mayors of Vienna.

Yet the spirit with which he permeated the Christian-Social Party, and which became and remained its tradition, was utterly disastrous. It was in the first place a spirit of outspoken hostility against democracy. Karl Lueger owed his power to a privileged suffrage, from which the working class was almost entirely excluded. He defended it tenaciously and would never yield an inch to democracy.

The defence of the privileged classes against democracy is not a feature peculiar to Lueger. But in civilised countries the privileged at least pretended to exercise their power impartially as the trustees of the whole community. Lueger was the first Mayor of Vienna to brush away this pretence. He openly and contemptuously harnessed the power which he wielded as the head of the city to the benefit of his own party. He proclaimed that neither Socialist nor Pan-German would ever be employed by any undertaking of the municipality. He dismissed municipal workers, servants or teachers merely for being Socialists. Among the latter victimised for their political convictions was Karl Seitz, who, twenty years later, himself became Mayor of Vienna. The whole range of jobs controlled by the City Council were practically reserved for members of his party. The same applied to municipal works contracts, large or small. Karl Lueger's system was marked by gross unfairness, intolerance and party corruption.

Karl Lueger, however, applied this system not merely to his political opponents, but also to his personal opponents within his own party. He arbitrarily dominated his party as well as the city. No member of his party with an independent mind could hope to obtain any responsible appointment; Lueger himself selected the persons who were to be "elected" as aldermen, town-councillors and deputies to Parliament, and in concluding municipal contracts even with his own party-members submission to his dictatorship was an indispensable condition.

Karl Lueger's spirit was, above all, characterised by the most cynical opportunism. He despised principles, and indeed he had none. He was once a Liberal; later he became an anti-

Liberal. He was once a Democrat, and even considered for a time joining the Social Democratic Party; later he scorned democracy and became the most virulent opponent of the Social Democrats. He was a Catholic and an ardent champion of the Church; but he had never known any religious sentiment. He was an anti-Semite, but he let himself be surrounded and feasted by Jewish friends, and he proclaimed: "I decide who is a Jew". Incidentally the Jews abused and persecuted by him were merely the Jewish pedlars and the Jewish Socialists; the rich and influential Jews were for the most part not considered by him to be Jews at all. He believed in nothing; the tenets he proclaimed were pretences. He was always ready to disavow any principle if it could serve his purpose.

This analysis of Lueger's mentality would be of small interest had it not shaped the spiritual character of the Christian-Social Party. Karl Lueger was the founder of the Party; he was the creator of its spiritual tradition; he imprinted the mark of his personality upon it. Engelbert Dollfuss, the last of Lueger's successors, acted precisely in the spirit, if not with the political cunning, of his predecessor, when he broke his oath to the Constitution, abolished democracy, beguiled his Socialist opponents before crushing them by fire and sword, and even dissolved his own party to make room for a perfect Fascist State in which he himself should play the role of dictator.

Engelbert Dollfuss was able to act in contradiction to the proclaimed principles of his party, because it was the tradition of the Christian-Social Party to proclaim expedients as principles. At one time the Christian-Social Party stood for the monarchical principle; at another time for the republican principle. At one time it stood for the Republic; at another time for the restoration of the Hapsburgs. At one time it stood for the union with Germany; at another time, long before Hitler came into power, it relinquished the principle of German unity but became once more Pan-Germanist when it appeared opportune. At one time it stood for Democracy; at another time it stood squarely for Fascism, pure and undisguised.

Lueger's spiritual legacy was disastrous, not merely because it ruined a State, but still worse because it ruined the morale of so many Austrians. During the twenty years the Christian-Social Party dominated Vienna, its spirit of cynicism, levity and opportunism pervaded the lower middle class, already prepared for the utmost flexibility in matters of principle by the

prevalent Jesuit influence in Austria since the triumph of the Counter-Reformation. Thus it was possible that the same mass of people who a few days before the Nazi occupation of Austria had protested they were ready to die in defence of their country against "that cursed Hitler", a few days after the occupation received that very same Hitler with frantic ovations such as had never before been bestowed on any human being who had ever paraded the streets of Vienna.

### *The Social Democratic Party*

In the Hapsburg State the workers had to fight extremely hard to assert their rights. They were treated by the Liberals with scorn, by the Church with hatred, by the aristocracy with contempt. They were excluded till the first decade of the twentieth century from Parliament, the Diets, the town halls. England had known trade unions as far back as the eighteenth century; after the repeal of Pitt's Combination Act in 1825 the English workers began again to build up their trade unions. When, in December 1869, 20,000 Viennese workers marched in procession before the House of Parliament demanding the right to form trade unions, fourteen of their leaders were impeached for high treason and sentenced to terms of four to five years hard labour. The Liberal Party, then in power, ultimately promulgated a Combination Act in the spring of 1870, but only a few months later it repressed some of the trade unions which had been founded under that Act. "In Austria there is not a social question," stated the Liberal Minister of Police in Parliament.

But still more stupendous than the hostility of the State was the hatred with which the Catholic Church persecuted the nascent Socialist movement in Austria. Pope Leo XIII had enunciated the encyclical *Quod apostolici numeris* on December 28, 1878; it was propagated in Austria more forcefully and with more ardent fanaticism than in any other Catholic country by the clergy, the Catholic Press and Catholic associations for more than thirty years. That encyclical was a formidable anathema against the "heresy of those who call themselves by the almost barbaric name Socialist, Communist or Nihilist". It was a bitter indictment of the Socialists and a fantastic interpretation of their aspiration to a just order of society. "Firmly united in a criminal association," the encyclical declared, "seized by the savage greed for wealth . . .

they propagate their monstrous ideas among the multitude." Small wonder, the encyclical goes on, that "the venerable magnificence of the kings and the ruling powers fell into discredit" and that "the people of the lower order became weary of their humble huts and workshops and glanced covetously at the palaces of the rich". The Pontiff called Socialism a "pestilence" and appealed to his flocks: "Beware that no Catholic joins or promotes this heretical association!"

Attempts by the Socialists to form a Labour Party in Austria never ceased, however ruthlessly the State intervened. The use of arbitrary power against the Socialists swelled the ranks of its extreme Left, a development welcomed by the Government in order to excuse its use of force against Labour. The Government even deliberately provoked the workers to resort to violence by police agents and draconian punishments,<sup>1</sup> and when this policy led to violent clashes between workers and the police, the Government declared a state of emergency in parts of Austria in 1884, suspended trial by jury and suppressed all workers' organisations and the Labour Press. This state of emergency which deprived the working class of any opportunity of legal political activity lasted for six years, and the number of Socialists who had to suffer imprisonment, were driven from their home-towns or deprived of their livelihood, was enormous.

However, when, under the pressure of increasing Labour unrest, the state of emergency was lifted, at the end of 1889, the Socialist movement revived almost over-night under the leadership of Victor Adler. He succeeded in reuniting the movement, split as it had been before into a reformist and radical wing, and in permeating it with a sense of devotion to a great cause.

Under Victor Adler's leadership the Austrian working-class movement swiftly gained the respect of society. The Court, the Government and the middle classes were deeply impressed and, at the same time, dismayed when the newly founded Social Democratic Party proclaimed a general strike in celebration of May Day in 1890, and carried it out in the teeth of the armed forces of the State, which had been mobilized to meet the workers' processions. The scorn and disdain with which the

<sup>1</sup> For instance, in 1881, for smuggling into Austria an Anarchist English paper, freely printed and distributed in Great Britain, a worker was sentenced to four years hard labour, and for printing a similar leaflet a worker was sentenced to twelve years hard labour.



rulers of the country had treated the Socialists hitherto now turned to utter dread. They had to relinquish once and for all the idea of suppression of the Labour movement; their policy of brutal violence had utterly failed. This, however, only increased their resolve to refuse the working class admittance to any body of influence in the State. Until 1907 the Austrian workers had no parliamentary suffrage, and until the revolution in 1918 they had no equal representation in municipal and local bodies.

The experiences of the Austrian Social Democratic Party imbued it with a psychology profoundly different from the psychology of the Christian-Social Party. The Christian-Social Party came into power soon after it was formed; and the power it attained was in fact the life-blood of the party. If ever Acton's saying was true that power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely, it was certainly true with regard to the Christian-Social Party. It developed the spirit of the *pervenu* who, having obtained dazzling wealth, was resolved to keep it at whatever cost. Some, of course, had joined that party from a sincere belief in the Catholic and patriotic principles which it professed; <sup>1</sup> but a far larger number joined and supported it from less idealistic and disinterested motives.

The Socialist movement remained powerless for half a century. No favour could be bought by joining it. Its members were ostracised and economically thwarted; they had to face imprisonment, victimization and frustration. Only the profound conviction of the righteousness of the cause for which the party stood could induce men to exchange the prospects of a career or, at least, an unmolested life for the hazard of membership of a party, cursed by the Church, hated by the wealthy, suspected by the authorities and abused by the ignorant.

But this half century of struggle—a hard, uphill struggle for principles and ideas—had hardened the character of the party and had shaped its spirit and tradition. Its members had endured persecution for the pursuit of their principles and ideas; these principles and ideas were therefore upheld with the earnestness of a creed. Thus, like a rock, the Social Democratic Party came unscathed through the tempest which wrecked the Hapsburg ship of State with its top-heavy rigging of officialdom and authoritarianism.

<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the faithful though tiny group led by Leopold Kunschak within the party refrained from supporting Dollfuss' Fascist course.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE WORKERS AND PEASANTS COALITION

FOR THE first two years, from 1918 until 1920, the government of the Republic was based on a coalition between the workers and peasants. In terms of parties, it was a coalition between the Social Democrats and the Christian-Social Party. But 1918 was the first time in the history of the Christian-Social Party that the peasant wing prevailed over its lower-middle class wing and that a peasant leader became its political head.

In the previous chapter we outlined roughly the social structure of the Christian-Social Party and attempted a brief analysis of the psychology of Karl Lueger's legacy. But clearly the psychology and spiritual tradition of the peasant membership of the party differed from the psychology of the Viennese middle class.

For one thing, the peasants in the small Alpine villages remained uncontaminated by the corrupting influence of the economic and political power wielded by the Christian-Social Party in Vienna. In the highlands they had to work hard to eke out a humble livelihood from the barren soil, and though the peasants in the lowlands were better off, the number of the well-to-do was small. They could, at any rate, derive no particular advantages from Lueger's domination of Vienna.

The Counter-Reformation had made them Catholic; they remained so by custom. The Counter-Reformation had cruelly broken their first attempt at self-assertion; they never rose again. The revolution of 1848 had liberated them from the last remnants of feudal servitude; they accepted this gift without gratitude. When, a few months after the liberation of the peasants, revolutionary Vienna was invested by the Hapsburg army, not a finger was raised by the Austrian peasants to help those who had liberated them. The Austrian peasants were conservative by tradition.

They were devoted to the Church, and always submitted to

its political leadership. The clergyman in the village was always, the bishop in the town often, the son of a peasant. Peasant and priest understood each other, and it was the priest, more educated than the peasant, whose influence ultimately prevailed.

As the Catholic Church in Austria was a pillar of the Hapsburg throne, the peasants also appeared to be genuinely patriotic and strongly devoted to the dynasty. But when the test came, in November 1918, it was revealed that they cared as little for Austria as for the Hapsburgs. There was no province in the whole of the Hapsburg realm which appeared more loyal to the Hapsburg cause than the Tyrol. But the Diet of the Tyrol was the first representative body in Austria which passed (as early as November 11, 1918) a resolution demanding the immediate proclamation of the Republic. With the same urgency the peasant leagues of Upper Austria and Carinthia pressed for the dethronement of the dynasty. And when the National Assembly debated the Bill concerning the banishment of the Hapsburgs from Austria and the confiscation of Crown property, there was an open split in the Christian-Social Party: the village leaders were in favour of the Bill, the town leaders opposed it. The same division of opinion became visible during the debate on the Bill for the abolition of titles and the impeachment of old Austrian generals and officers for war crimes. In the eyes of the Church, the deposition of the dynasty, their banishment and the confiscation of their property was a hideous crime; yet the peasants insisted upon it. For the first time in generations the Austrian Alpine peasants refused to accept the political leadership of the Church and acted in defiance of its wishes.

This change of mind and habit reflected the revolutionary mood of the peasants produced by the experiences of war. They hated the war; and as it dragged on, they began to hate the dynasty responsible for it. They hated the generals who had so badly mismanaged the war and they hated the officers who had treated them so harshly in barracks and trenches. Above all, they hated the economic repercussions of the war: the price controls of live-stock, dairy products, wheat and hay; the requisitioning of their harvest and their cattle; the scarcity of labour owing to army recruitment. They had, indeed, come to hate every institution of old Austria: the dynasty, the army, the bureaucracy. They wanted to be rid of them all. Although the Catholic Church was certainly also an institution of the

Monarchy, it had of course to remain, but it had to cease to dominate political life. Such was the mood of peasants in November 1918, a revolutionary mood never experienced before since the sixteenth century. And like the workers in the towns, so the peasants in the villages wanted to see Austria a free, democratic Republic.

This identity of mood between peasant and worker was the basis of the Coalition Government. It was not merely a coalition of parties; it was fundamentally a coalition of classes: of the working class and the peasant class.

### *Counter-Revolutionary Trends Among the Peasants*

The work of the Coalition Government started with good will and the most sincere intentions on both sides. Yet it could not last, because their conflicting interests immediately clashed and, above all, because the Austrian peasant class was in its ideology and political organisation not yet an independent social force.

The situation was pregnant with discontent. The peasants wanted, first of all, to be delivered from war restrictions: from price controls, from quotas, from requisitioning. That obviously could not be done. The towns, and particularly Vienna, were starving. The territories which formed the newly founded Republic were cut off from the old Austrian territories which had supplied them hitherto, and the war had ruined their agriculture. Owing to labour scarcity, the uncultivated area of the Republic had increased during the war from 65,000 hectares to 295,000 hectares, while the yield per hectare of wheat had decreased from 14·7 cwt. to 8·7 cwt., of rye from 14·8 cwt. to 8·6 cwt., of potatoes from 93·6 cwt. to 50·3 cwt.; the stock of live animals in the Alps was greatly depleted. The Social Democrats in the Government had to insist on the maintenance of price control and a regulated distribution of food in order to prevent disaster. As the peasants, however, frequently refused to deliver, the Government had to resort to coercive means to enforce it.

The peasants were paid in bank-notes for their products. But as the currency depreciated, and as, at the same time, the production of agricultural implements and commodities declined owing to the scarcity of raw materials and coal, the peasants did not receive in kind a fair return for their work. They naturally felt they were cheated by the towns and by the Government.

The revolutionary temper of Vienna, of its workers and demobilised soldiers and, above all, the gigantic social emergency produced by the sudden collapse of the Monarchy, imposed upon the Coalition Government the need for carrying out social reforms swiftly. But each of these social welfare measures was revolting to the traditional outlook of the peasant. For example, he used to see the unemployed as mere idlers, and the idea of sustaining them from public funds appeared to him simply fantastic. He grumbled about unemployment insurance and complained that the money spent by the Government on the unemployed was being taken from his pocket. The eight-hour day seemed to him an outrageous frivolity in face of the twelve and fourteen hours he was used to working, and he regarded the institution of paid holidays as an expression of the insolence of the workers. The peasants in the Government knew that these things had to be done; but the peasants in the village were shocked.

The social elevation of the workers in the towns had repercussions on the villages. Poor as the peasant was, he was still the master of his holding, and however small the number of hands he hired for the season, it was not his habit to discuss wages and working conditions with them. Now agricultural labourers were no longer quite satisfied with their traditional treatment, and that also annoyed the peasants greatly.

The Government had had to recruit a new military force (called *Volkswehr*) to replace the dissolved Imperial Army. Most of its members were demobilised soldiers who could not find work, and the discipline of the troops for a time was not very good. It happened occasionally that small bands of the *Volkswehr* went into villages to requisition food. The peasants became furious with the *Volkswehr*. They had hoped that with the disappearance of the dynasty the hated army would also disappear. But there again was an army, and worse than the first, because it was in fact a Red Army, and a disorderly one.

And then there were the shop stewards. Again it happened occasionally that shop stewards of factories in the countryside went into neighbouring villages to secure food for their workers. Such actions aggravated the feelings of the peasants towards the towns and the workers.

And, above all, there was Vienna—"Red Vienna". In those first weeks and months the capital of the Republic was shaken by a revolutionary tempest. As early as November 1918 a Communist Party had been founded, and although its member-

ship always remained small, it had a strong foothold in the army, and sometimes swayed great masses of workers, partly inspired by a genuine, though romantic idea of revolutionary Socialism, partly driven on the streets by the bitterness of grim destitution.

### *Bolshevik Trends Among the Workers*

The Communists aimed at the transformation of the democratic Republic into a Soviet Republic. Their impetus gained tremendously in weight when, at the beginning of March 1919, Hungary and, a month later, Bavaria turned Bolshevik. For the Hungarian Soviet Republic the immediate victorious outcome of the struggle of the Communists in Austria appeared to be a matter of life and death. Hungary was involved in a two-front war against Czechoslovakia and Rumania, and believed that she could survive only if supported by the man-power and the arsenal of Austria.

This hope was specious, for even if the Communists had overthrown the democratic Republic and established a Bolshevik dictatorship in Vienna, the Austrian peasants as well as the Allies would have starved it out. Italian troops stationed in Carinthia would have taken the capital, however heroically it might have resisted. Still more utopian was the assumption that if Austria became Bolshevik, Germany would follow suit. In March 1919 the Communist risings had already spent their strength; and the Munich revolution in April, generated by the assassination of the Bavarian Social Democratic Prime Minister, Kurt Eisner, was crushed in a few weeks. Had the Austrian workers joined Bolshevik Hungary, they would not have saved her, but would have shared her merciless doom.

It was, however, not so easy for the common worker to perceive the intricate labyrinth of the real power relations. He was not quite aware that the chunk of bread and the tiny bit of fat he got on his ration card round the corner was supplied chiefly by the Allies *via* Trieste, precisely under the condition that there must be no Bolshevism in Vienna, otherwise there would be no bread or fat at all. He believed that because the working-class power was irresistible in Vienna, it was also irresistible in the provinces. He believed that because Hungary and Bavaria had proclaimed the dictatorship of the proletariat, it should be possible to proclaim it also in Austria. Was the world revolution not striding over Europe?

he wondered. In Russia it had triumphed, Hungary and Bavaria had joined—there was nothing, but the stretch of Polish land separating the Russian Red Army from the Hungarian Red Army, and if simultaneously Austria would rise and join hands with Bolshevik Hungary and Bolshevik Bavaria, and the Russian Red Army would break through Poland, then the world revolution would irresistibly spread from Munich to Berlin, from Vienna to Prague, from the Rhine to the Seine, from Paris to Rome.

Such was the vision the Communist orators unfolded in their packed meetings, and wild cheers followed when they exclaimed in Danton's words: "Be daring, daring, daring!"

But this fascinating vision was not borne out by the real power relations in the world. The Russian Red Army, then still in its infancy and absorbed by civil wars, had not the strength to overrun Poland. Czechoslovakia was in the throes of a national, not of a social revolution; when she went to war against Bolshevik Hungary to conquer Slovak territories, neither the Czech Communists nor Socialists resisted. Nor would there have been a revolutionary rising in France if the French army at the Rhine had been ordered to march on Berlin to crush a Bolshevik Germany, for the overwhelming majority of the French people had just a little while before in the general elections returned the counter-revolutionary nationalists to power.

These were the hard facts. But for the common worker it was extremely difficult to believe them. He was not in a mood for cool reasoning. He had passed through the furnace of the war; he had endured a winter of grim starvation, darkness and cold. His nerves were wretched, his body was enfeebled, he was unemployed, he saw no hope, he was profoundly disappointed with the course of the revolution at home. How enthusiastically he had welcomed it! He had expected a new heaven and a new earth. Yet he noticed only the old squalor and a new misery. So he went on the streets, joined the Communist demonstrations, shouted, screamed, broke shop-windows, and set the House of Parliament on fire.

### *Psychological Reaction of the Peasants*

The peasant in his lonely village read in the papers about riots, lootings and shootings in the streets of Vienna, and he was disgusted and terrified. Should the Bolsheviks seize Vienna, he

thought, then they would take away his cow from his shed, and perhaps his holding, too. He did not understand the workers' craving for a new world. He knew of Socialism only from the distorted image crudely painted for him by the priest. Its conception of the equality of man appeared to him absurd. Although he himself belonged by no means to the wealthy class, the Socialist claim to a juster distribution of the wealth of the earth seemed to him presumptuous and impertinent, like robbery in daylight. He did not perceive that in the tribulation of the war the old order of society had gone for ever and that the whole economic, social and political structure of the nineteenth-century world was subject to bewildering revolutionary processes. All that he believed was that the revolution in November 1918 had already achieved its purpose by the dethroning of the Hapsburg dynasty and by the disbanding of its army; for the rest he wanted order and return to the normal ways of life.

Before the revolution the Austrian peasant was a Conservative Catholic. He was organised politically in the Christian-Social Party, or in a peasant league affiliated to it, and economically in an agricultural co-operative. He was untouched by the current of the modern world; he was still swayed by superstitious beliefs; he was not of a contemplative nature. He never pondered about the riddles of the world. He had never experienced a deep religious feeling since Catholicism had been re-imposed upon him by the Counter-Reformation. He read no books, hardly even the Bible; his sole literature was a peasant almanac, containing a few short stories and some advice for agriculturalists, and a paltry local weekly with meagre news. In his ideological world there was God-the-Father with His court in heaven, and an emperor with his court on earth; and then there was a social and economic hierarchy. Such to him was the eternal order of things. Embittered by his sufferings during the war, he wanted to get rid of the emperor, the aristocrats, the generals and the bureaucrats. But he wanted to see only the apex of the social pyramid levelled; he did not want its entire destruction. Yet it now appeared to him as if the whole pyramid was shaken to its foundations and about to collapse. In the summer of 1919 he regretted his fit of revolutionary temper of autumn 1918. He became again susceptible to monarchist propaganda.

He began to hate Vienna. He had never liked it, even in its days of imperial glamour. Its wealth, its unrest, its dazzling



glitter, had been repulsive to him; it appeared to him like Babylon the city of sin, the city of corn-jobbers, harlots, thieves, idlers and impudent paupers. But then it was still also the seat of mysterious majesty which ruled so vast an empire. Yet now its magic had gone and the capital was, as he was told, in the hands of a turbulent mob, a mob of Socialists and Bolsheviks, led and spurred on by Jews. He became again susceptible to anti-Semitic propaganda.

In the tempestuous weeks and months during which the Monarchy disintegrated and the Republic was born, the Austrian peasant feared invasion, civil war and chaos. He felt relieved to see the Social Democrats taking a strong hand in weathering the storm, and the Social Democratic Chancellor, Karl Renner, collaborating with the Christian-Social peasant leader, Jodok Fink, as his deputy. He had forgotten then that he used to speak spitefully of the Social Democrats as the "Red Jews"; he remembered only that Karl Renner, one of their leaders, was after all the son of a Moravian peasant, and Karl Seitz, the chairman of their party, the son of a Lower Austrian wine-grower; among the provincial leaders of the Social Democrats there were no Jews at all. At any rate, he then understood that the peasants had to co-operate with the workers, the Christian-Social Party with the Social Democrats.

The invasion, civil war and chaos, which the peasant had feared, was avoided, but the newly founded State, while it took shape, was in the grip of a hopeless economic and a vehement social crisis. The anti-Socialist propaganda put all the blame for the distress upon "the Jews": the "Jewish Labour leaders", who goaded the masses in the streets, the "Jewish stockbrokers", whose speculations caused the inflation, the "Jewish black marketeers", whose manipulations caused scarcity.

### *The Mood of the Middle Classes*

The anti-Socialist propaganda increased after the defeat of the Bolshevik cities of Munich and Budapest. The triumph of the counter-revolution in Bavaria and Hungary inspired the forces of the *ancien régime* in Austria with new hopes. They naturally hated the Republic which had deprived them of privileges, titles, power and wealth. The depreciation of the currency, which they attributed to the Republic, had impoverished a considerable section of them: generals, officers, Civil Servants and all who lived on pensions, salaries or the

interest from savings. During the first months of the revolution they were fear-stricken, because they apprehended outbursts of vengeance in the streets against the men of yesterday. Although there were no "revolutionary massacres", or even acts of individual violence, they were unable to reconcile themselves to the new state of affairs; their fall from the height of pride and power to utter social insignificance had been too great.

Still less was the Austrian middle class prepared to submit to the new regime. To the industrialists and merchants it meant interference by shop stewards in the management of their factories and overriding power for the trade unions; it meant an eight-hour day, paid holidays, social taxation, with the threat of the socialisation of industry in the background. To the bankers it meant State control of currency just when currency speculation was at its height, threat of a capital levy and even of the confiscation of their wealth. And to all of them it meant, above all, the rule of the "lower order" in the State.

Yet the aristocracy, the officers of the imperial army, now jobless on the street, and even the commercial middle class, were powerless; they lacked even the instrument of a political party, for they had no party of their own. And the only anti-Socialist party which counted—the Christian-Social Party—was now dominated by its peasant wing and collaborated with the Social Democrats.

The bulk of the rank and file of the Christian-Social Party in Vienna was the lower middle class. It was not happy about the Republic either. The small artisans, grocers and shopkeepers were hard hit by the universal crisis. Many of them had put all their savings in war bonds; as the currency depreciated they lost everything. A number of them had invested their savings in houses; the Rent Restriction Laws deprived them of their revenue. They deemed the Socialists responsible for their particular distress. For many of these middle-class people their connection with the Town Hall had been a source of commercial advantage, or at least of social honour; now the Town Hall, too, had fallen into the hands of the "Reds". Thus Christian-Social middle-class people were by no means content with the peasant leadership of their party. They disliked its co-operation with the Social Democrats in the construction of the Republic; they hated it, and dreamt about the restoration of the Hapsburgs as the symbol of the golden age of the past.

But the Viennese middle class was then not yet in a position

to wrest from the peasants the leadership of the party. An overriding power, respected by all, was needed to rally the discontent from such diverse quarters—a power superior in intelligence, diplomatic skill and means of organisation. This power was to be the Roman Catholic Church.

### *The Attitude of the Roman Catholic Church*

The most implacable of all the enemies of the Republic was surely the Roman Catholic Church. With the fall of the Hapsburgs it had lost its most faithful and most powerful royal support in the world. From the triumph of the Counter-Reformation in the beginning of the seventeenth century until 1867 (with some breaks) the Catholic Church was virtually the totalitarian master of the minds and souls of all the peoples under Hapsburg rule.<sup>1</sup>

What the power of the Church in Austria actually meant was manifested in the Concordat, concluded between the Hapsburg emperor and the Pope in 1855. In this Concordat, which was promulgated as a constitutional law, the State recognised the "imprescriptible rights proceeding from the Divine origin of the Church"; it secured to the "Holy Roman Catholic religion all privileges according to God's disposition and the laws of the Church, for everlasting time"; it empowered the bishops to denounce any book which they deemed pernicious to religion, and pledged the Government to prevent its circulation; it transferred the supervision of school teachers, of the curriculum of the elementary schools as well as of the preparatory schools, and especially of the religious education, to the bishops; it restored the ecclesiastical court and subordinated to its justice all people belonging to the Catholic Church; it transferred the civil divorce courts to the jurisdiction of the Church and extended it to marriages, even to such as were half Protestant or half Jewish; it empowered the

<sup>1</sup> From the time of the Counter-Reformation until 1867 (except during the reign of Joseph II and the short break of the revolution of 1848) every book published in Austria had to pass two censors: the State censor and the censor of the Roman Catholic Church. For instance, Palacky, the greatest of the Czech historians, published as late as 1836 the first volume of his history of Bohemia. The censor challenged the statement that Hus' courage at his trial forced even his adversaries to admiration. "The Catholic Church", he declared, "does not see courage but insolence and obstinacy founded on utter blindness." In spite of the historian's manly protest he had to give way and was compelled to suppress certain passages, and even to insert interpolations from the censor's pen as his own work.

bishop to forbid a marriage "if he apprehends that it might cause discord or anger or other harm"; it declared the property of the Church "holy and inviolable" and restored to the Church the monastic property secularised by Joseph II in 1781; it re-established the Order of the Jesuits, suppressed in 1848; it conferred on Catholic associations certain privileges; it finally imposed upon the State the obligation of tolerating no amendments of law touching religious matters or relations between religious communities in the country without previous consent by the Vatican. Europe rightly regarded the Concordat as the final capitulation of the State to the Church and, in commenting upon it, *The Times* declared that "a Crown worn under such conditions is not worth the metal of which it is made".

Such, then, was the powerful position of the Roman Catholic Church in Austria. A Liberal deputy, in a speech in Parliament (in 1864), described it aptly when he observed: "It has often been said that in Austria about sixty aristocratic families run the State as their private estate; that is true, yet not the full truth. Only by adding to these sixty aristocratic families another thirty or forty bishops, have you the full truth." From 1836 until 1876 the number of monasteries in Austria increased from 469 to 800, and the number of monks and nuns from 6,000 to 12,000. And although the Liberal Government infringed some rights of the Church and established inter-confessional schools under State surveillance in 1869, until the collapse of the Monarchy in 1918 Roman Catholicism still wielded more formidable power in Austria than in any other country in the world, save Spain.

During the first months of the revolution which followed the Hapsburgs' fall, the Church feared persecution and, above all, the secularisation of its vast landed property and of its immense treasures of gold and jewels. Austrian Catholicism had made the Hapsburg war the Church's cause, and in the eyes of the common man it was equally responsible for the misery which the war had produced. The apprehension of the Church was thus not quite unjustified. Yet the Church was not molested, nor was its property confiscated; the peasant representatives in the Government would never have tolerated that. The Church was relieved, but was by no means reconciled to the Republic. It remained at first apparently inactive. It waited its chance. That chance came with the triumph of the counter-revolution in Bavaria and Hungary. Now, slowly and cautiously, it began

the work of organising the counter-revolution in Austria. It needed nearly fourteen years to accomplish its task. On February 12, 1934, it smashed the Republic.

The architect of the Catholic counter-revolution in Austria was the Papal Promotary, Prelate Ignaz Seipel, a man of great ability, integrity of character and with a passionate hatred of Socialism; he possessed the quality of a great statesman, but with the outlook of a papal diplomat of the seventeenth century. Yet he was the sole outstanding figure in the camp of the Right, towering far above the other leaders of his party.

Seipel realised clearly that he had, first of all, to strengthen the urban wing of the Christian-Social Party by an alliance between the lower and the upper middle class, the artisans and the big industrialists, the grocers and the bankers. The first were anti-Semites, the second partly Jews; he reconciled them to all intents and purposes. The anti-Semitic language of the Christian-Social orators and papers in Vienna became a little more guarded; in return, the associations of the big industrialists and bankers financed the Christian-Social Party and its counter-revolutionary auxiliary forces (semi-military troops, called the *Heimwehr*), and the former Liberal, anti-Clerical Press, owned and written exclusively by Jews, now became the champion of the Clerical Christian-Social cause.

Prelate Seipel further conceived the need of exploiting the barren discontent of the pensioned imperial officers and deposed aristocrats. Their natural field of counter-revolutionary activity was the military organisation of the *Heimwehr*. Seipel encouraged its formation, secured the means to arm it, and lent his prestige to this rather questionable body.

However, the coalition between the workers and peasants in the Government was still firm, chiefly because there was no alternative to it. While the working class did not possess the power, either in 1918 or in 1919, to establish a Socialist regime, it was powerful enough to prevent the establishment of a Christian-Social regime; in fact it would never have suffered it for a single day from November 1918 until October 1920. All arms in the State, the railways and the factories were under Socialist sway. The Austrian Socialists realised from the beginning the power factor in society, and they were anxious to avoid Noske's disastrous error in restoring authority to the imperial officers in the newly formed army; they had necessarily to employ them, but the real power in the army rested with the

privates and non-commissioned officers, organised in Soldiers' Councils.

While Prelate Seipel hoped to wreck the peasants' and workers' coalition, he realised that he could not achieve this by forcing the pace in face of the actual power relations. All he could do, and did do with his perseverance, and a genius for intrigue and persuasion, was to accentuate the antagonism between the peasants and the working class and to thwart the labours of the Coalition Government.

### *The Results of the Coalition Government*

During the first year of the coalition the Socialists succeeded in introducing a great system of social legislation; they even succeeded in obtaining the consent of Parliament to an Act, constituting the framework for an ingenious construction of socialisation, inspired by G. D. H. Cole's conception of Guild Socialism and Sidney and Beatrice Webb's *Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth*. With this instrument, the Arsenal in Vienna, a big arms plant owned formerly by the State, was transformed into a socialised enterprise for the production of commodities, controlled by a board composed of representatives of the State and shop stewards, with the co-operatives as customers. On the same basis factories producing medical drugs, building materials, shoes and leather wares were set up. But as Seipel succeeded, step by step, in the political fusion of the upper middle class with the lower, so the weight of the capitalist wing of the party increased. The resistance of the Christian-Socials in Parliament to a further extension of social legislation and socialisation stiffened. Many workers now felt that they could expect nothing further from the Coalition Government—nothing, that is, in comparison with the responsibility of the Socialists as partners in a coalition. They urged its termination. Thus under the pressure of the Socialist left wing and the right wing of the Christian-Social Party the coalition came to an end in October 1920.

The Coalition Government was the first and only attempt in Austria to base the State on co-operation between workers and the peasants. It saved the young Republic from chaos, civil war and foreign occupation; it conferred State power on the common people through the medium of a democratic organisation rising from the village council to the National Council; it gave the peasant and worker the social status not only of full

citizenship (which they never before had enjoyed), but also of the chief agent for the commonwealth's economic life. The coalition regime realised, within the limits of the prevailing internal and external conditions, the aims of both peasant and working class. It was the exact reflection of the actual power relationship in society.

But while the working class was ideologically and politically an independent force, the peasant class was not. It asserted its independence for the first time in its history in November 1918. But it was by tradition still so intricately enmeshed in the vast spiritual and political network of the Church and of the Christian-Social Party that it could not retain such independence for long. It lost it slowly, and never regained it in the lifetime of the Republic. This is the fundamental reason why the experiment of the peasant-worker Coalition Government was never tried again.

## CHAPTER SIX

### THE ORGANISATION OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

THE HISTORY of the First Austrian Republic might roughly be divided into three periods. The first lasted from November 1918 until October 1920; it was the period of the peasant-working class coalition, based on the paramountcy of the peasants in the Christian-Social Party and of the Socialists in the State. The second lasted from October 1920 until July 1927; in this period the urban wing of the Christian-Social Party superseded its rural wing, the Church regained its predominance in the leadership of that Party and organized the forces of the counter-revolution. The third period lasted from July 1927 until February 1934; it was the period of the offensive and of the final triumph of the counter-revolution in Austria.

It should be noted that the actual course of development was in fact far more complex than this crude division would indicate. It was complicated by economic disasters and social upheavals, by under-currents in the Christian-Social camp and by dissensions among the Fascists, by interventions of the League of Nations, by Hapsburg intrigues, by the antagonism between Czechoslovakia and Hungary, by the discord between Italy and Yugoslavia, by the counter-revolutionary aspirations of Bavaria, by the diplomacy of the Vatican, and by interferences of Horthy, Mussolini and Hitler.

The Great Powers had insisted in their Peace Treaty that Austria must accept "independence". The "independence" of Austria was a farce from beginning to end; Austria was in fact the chessboard on which five of her six neighbours fought out their struggle for power. There were in Vienna big daily newspapers in the pay of the Hungarian, Czech or Italian Government; the counter-revolutionary *Heimwehr* of the Tyrol and Salzburg was armed by Bavaria, the *Heimwehr* under the command of Prince Starhemberg, Vice-Chancellor of the Dollfuss Government, was armed by Italy. The Nazi movement in



Austria was subsidised by the Hitler Government, the Hapsburg movement was subsidised by the Horthy Government. Ultimately Mussolini prevailed in Austria over Hitler, Hungary over Czechoslovakia, Catholicism over Socialism, the Monarchists over the Republic. Dollfuss' decision to smash the Republic was finally determined by the policy of the two Romes: the papal and the Fascist.

The counter-revolution derived its forces from different social and ideological quarters; their ultimate aims therefore differed. They had in common only hatred of the Republic, anger at the Socialists and a burning desire to smash both. But beyond this common, immediate aim they differed in purpose.

### *The Monarchists*

The Hapsburgs had resided in Vienna for 600 years until November 1918. From Vienna they had ruled a vast, far-flung empire. They had been the oldest, the greatest, the most respected dynasty of Europe. The idea of accepting the verdict of history as irrevocable and of abdicating for ever certainly never entered their minds. In the course of their centuries-old history they had suffered many setbacks; yet they had always been able to retrieve their losses in one way or another. Thus they were naturally resolved once more to regain what they had lost. Europe was in a state of turmoil; the former countries of the Austrian Crown were shaken by social unrest and political strife; everything was in flux. Not very long ago, Hungary, for example, had been a democratic Republic; a few months later it became a Soviet Republic, and in another few months the Hungarian Kingdom was restored. What occurred yesterday in Hungary might occur to-morrow in Austria or somewhere else. The Hapsburgs by no means felt that they had finally lost their game.

Nor did they feel entirely deserted in Europe. Hungary, they assumed, was already theirs; Horthy, the head of the restored Kingdom, was merely a regent, until Charles could take the opportunity to assume the throne. Then there was the worldwide spiritual and political organisation of the Roman Catholic Church, certainly Hapsburgs' most faithful ally. Then there was the priceless treasure of sympathy for the Hapsburgs in some of Europe's Courts. It also appeared as if French diplomacy, anxious to sustain the encirclement of Germany and prevent the *Anschluss*, would like to see the re-emergence of

the Hapsburg rule in Austria, thus barring that country from joining Germany; the Hapsburgs considered the Quay d'Orsay at any rate as a potential ally. And finally there were Hapsburg allies in Austria itself: the nobility, from the lowest to the highest; former imperial officers living out their aimless life on a meagre pension; high-ranking bureaucrats; certain sections of the upper and the lower middle classes of Vienna and, above all, the peasants of the Alps.

The peasant had returned to his village from the war zone as often as not with his rifle. In Carinthia and Styria military bodies (called *Heimwehr*) had been formed for defence against the Yugoslavs. In other parts of Austria there were peasant *Heimwehr* units for defence against the food requisitions by the shop stewards. When Hungary and Bavaria were declared Soviet Republics they feared that Bolshevism might spread, and more *Heimwehr* units were formed. At this stage of development the movement had been confined mainly to self-defence, with little positive political aim.

But the *Heimwehr* was potentially a reactionary movement, and the power instrument it had created could easily be used for counter-revolutionary purposes. The Hapsburg Monarchists were the first to grasp the importance of the *Heimwehr*, and attempted to make it serve their cause. Local aristocrats, officers of the old army, clergymen and Christian-Social lawyers and teachers in the small provincial towns joined the *Heimwehr* as organisers and military leaders.

The Hapsburg issue in the *Heimwehr* became acute when the ex-Emperor Charles suddenly appeared in Hungary in March 1921, to assume the throne. Horthy had restored the Kingdom of Hungary, and Charles, crowned in Budapest only a few years before, was undoubtedly its legitimate king. But Horthy deemed it then not opportune to hand over power to the King; he, on the contrary, intimated that he would use force against him should he not retreat. Charles had to withdraw, and when he crossed the Austrian frontier he was arrested by the Austrian Government and brought under escort to the Swiss frontier.

Charles' *coup* electrified the Austrian Monarchists. Although he had failed this time, he might, they thought, succeed later if the *coup* was properly prepared. In the restored Kingdom of Hungary the Hapsburg cause was legally unassailable; a powerful Hungarian aristocracy and probably parts of the Hungarian army would certainly favour the Hapsburgs' return. Charles failed last time, because he had trusted merely

to Horthy; he would succeed next time if supported by the organised power of the Hungarian Legitimists. And then, they maintained, if the Hapsburgs were once installed in Budapest, the *Heimwehr*, under Monarchist command, would conquer Vienna.

These expectations were scarcely realistic. For one thing, they neglected the international implications of a Hapsburg restoration. Czechoslovakia, Rumania and Yugoslavia would never tolerate it. All these three countries had incorporated into their States lands which had belonged to the Kingdom of Hungary before 1919; it was in defence of their Hungarian acquisitions that these three States had concluded an alliance, the Little Entente. They would see in the re-enthronement of the Hapsburgs in Hungary a threat to their security and a challenge to international treaties. Indeed, when, in October 1921, Charles repeated his *coup*, this time supported by elements of the Hungarian army, Czechoslovakia at once announced that she would regard a restoration of the Hapsburgs in Hungary as a *casus belli*, and to demonstrate the seriousness of her attitude she ordered the instant mobilisation of her army; Yugoslavia and Rumania joined Czechoslovakia in the declaration. Charles' troops were defeated by Horthy, the ex-Emperor was made a prisoner and sent overseas; he died in Madeira on his journey to his next exile. The Austrian Monarchists, though deeply disappointed, were, however, not discouraged. They remembered that it took twenty-two years for the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty in France; they were resolved to wait for their turn. Meanwhile they entrenched themselves in the *Heimwehr*.

### *The Clerico-Fascists*

The idea of a Hapsburg counter-revolution appealed to the more romantic reactionaries; the more realistic champions of the counter-revolution endeavoured to obtain the support of the only Fascist Power which then really counted in Europe; that was Italy.

Mussolini wanted to remain on good terms with the Vatican, with which he had concluded a Concordat. But he could not easily approve the restoration of the Hapsburgs; firstly, because the Italians traditionally hated them as the arch-enemy of their freedom and unity through the centuries, and, secondly, because the re-emergence of a Hapsburg Power in Central Europe would have foiled his own political plans.

There was enmity between Italy and Yugoslavia. Italy had forcibly annexed Fiume and some towns on the Dalmatian coast; Yugoslavia wanted to regain them. Italy, however, far from conceding anything to Yugoslavia, aspired to a further extension of her ascendancy in the Adriatic and the Western Balkans.

Mussolini's natural allies against Yugoslavia were Horthy-Hungary (Yugoslavia had annexed Hungarian lands) and the nationalist Catholic movement in Croatia, which aimed at the separation of that province from Yugoslavia. But between Italy, on the one side, and Hungary and Croatia, on the other, lay Austria.

Mussolini did not want to see Austria united with Germany, because Germany, enlarged by Austria, would become Italy's neighbour and might thus endanger Italy's hold on the South Tyrol; she would also become Hungary's and Croatia's neighbour and might thus thwart his own policy. But equally disagreeable to him was Austria's independence as a democratic Republic. He wanted to arm Hungary and the separatist movement in Croatia. That could be done only in the utmost secrecy, because Hungary's armament was restricted by the Treaty of Trianon, and the separatist movement in Croatia was an internal affair of the Yugoslav Kingdom. Mussolini's supply road to Hungary and Croatia lay through Austria, and vigilant Austrian railwaymen had discovered arms transports designed for Hungary and exposed them. Democracy in Austria, with her free Labour movement and her free Press, became a serious nuisance to Mussolini's plans.

Democracy in Austria was, however, in fact more than a nuisance; it was the main obstacle to Mussolini's imperialistic aims in Central Europe. Mussolini wanted to link up Italy with Hungary and Croatia by forcing Austria into the Italian orbit. Then Italy's sphere of influence would extend to the Danube and sunder Czechoslovakia from Yugoslavia by a broad mass of territory under Italian hegemony. It was clear that so long as democracy in Austria was upheld Mussolini's design could not materialise.

Mussolini's conception, however, appealed strongly to the Austrian counter-revolutionaries in the Catholic camp, for it aimed at a bloc of Fascist Catholic States, stretching across Central Europe from Catholic Bavaria in the North to Catholic Croatia in the South. The Vatican favoured that idea. When Prelate Seipel became Chancellor for the first time in August

1922, he went to Verona to meet the Italian Foreign Minister, to whom he offered a currency and customs union between Austria and Italy—an economic union which must necessarily have enforced a political union. That idea was never abandoned either by Fascist Italy or by the Catholic reactionaries in Austria. Mussolini supported the *Heimwehr* movement to further this aim. He almost achieved it when the Austrian Republic was smashed. Austria, after Dollfuss' *coup* (in February 1934) and the Stresa Conference (in April 1935), virtually became an Italian protectorate.

### *The National Socialists*

The National Socialist movement in Austria was always weak until Hitler's first victory at the polls in Germany. In Vienna the thin strata of society which backed it was composed of a section of university students and university teachers, and some Civil Servants, lawyers, office clerks and factory managers. The movement was comparatively stronger in the provincial towns, particularly in Innsbruck, Linz and Gratz; in Carinthia it even penetrated the countryside. But nowhere did its strength suffice to obtain a single seat in Parliament.

The nationalist intelligentsia of the country towns and villages had joined the *Heimwehr*, because it was "anti-Marxist", anti-Socialist and anti-Semitic. But the Austro-German nationalists were also anti-Clerical and anti-Hapsburg, and as they aspired to union with Germany, they wanted the *Heimwehr* movement linked up with Hitler's headquarters in Munich, not with Mussolini's headquarters in Rome.

The Nazi movement in Austria increased when the Nazis gained the first decisive triumph in Germany at the Reichstag election in September 1930. The movement began to make itself felt, even in Vienna. The Viennese lower middle class, always attracted by success and vacillating between the tempered anti-Semitism of the Christian-Socials and the vulgar anti-Semitism of the Nazis, now flocked in masses into the Nazi camp. With the growth of the Nazi movement, its influence in the *Heimwehr* also grew. When Hitler assumed power in Germany he was anxious to eliminate Italian influence in Austria and to force Dollfuss to toe the Nazi line. Hitherto the Italian Embassy in Vienna had been the headquarters of the Fascist plot against the Republic; now the Germany Embassy became the headquarters for the Nazi con-

quest of Austria. It put the financial and diplomatic resources of the German Reich at the disposal of the Austrian Nazi movement, it directed its Press and organisations, it supplied it with arms through Bavaria.

The counter-revolutionary movement in Austria was thus beset with dissensions from the beginning. It was of minor importance that the Monarchists were disquieted by the Clerico-Fascists' course, because they feared the incorporation of Austria into the Italian orbit might diminish the chances of a Hapsburg restoration. The split between the Clerico-Fascist wing and the Nazi wing of the counter-revolution was, however, of quite a different order. In that contest was involved the struggle between Germany and Italy for hegemony in Central and Eastern Europe.

### *The Turning-point*

The counter-revolutionary movement in Austria was, however, until July 15, 1927, a spectre which haunted no one. Till then the Social Democratic movement appeared invincible. It could muster the loyalty of 600,000 members and the confidence of more than two-fifths of the country's electorate. Its Government in Vienna was supported by two-thirds of the population, and it administered municipalities, including Vienna, containing 47 per cent of Austria's total inhabitants. In the factories and on the railways the workers were organised in the trade unions with scarcely any exception. Although the Socialists had left the Government seven years before, their influence upon the army was still dominating; it could certainly not be used for a counter-revolutionary *coup*. It was not even quite certain that the police force would serve a design against the Republic, for many of its members professed their adherence to the Social Democratic Party. The Socialists were further in command of a self-defence organisation of their own, the *Republikanische Schutzbund* (Republican Defence Union), a para-military body of well-trained and well-armed workers, almost twice as strong as the army. The Republic seemed unassailable.

Yet the cleavage between the countryside and Vienna, between the Christian-Socials and the Social Democrats, deepened as the years went by, and disintegrated the basis of the Republic.

It was, in the first place, the economic plight of the country which accounted for the bitterness of feeling in both camps.

All attempts at the reconstruction of Austria had failed. Although the currency was sound, thanks to a loan granted by the League of Nations, the country's economy had crumpled up.<sup>1</sup> Austria's export trade had decreased by 68·4 per cent (from 526,000,000 dollars to 166,000,000) within four years 1928-33, the price of wheat fell by 50 per cent, and the price of rye by more than 60 per cent from 1925 until 1930. The peasants as well as the middle classes were alarmed; they attributed the universal misery, caused in fact by the world slump and accentuated by the special conditions of Austria, to "Socialist experiments" in Vienna and to the welfare services imposed upon industry by the Socialists.

The workers, on the other hand, were embittered by mass unemployment, the cause of which they attributed to the capitalist economy of the Christian-Social Government. Out of a total of 1,374,000 insured workers, there were even in the boom period never less than 200,000 on the dole; the number of unemployed increased to 406,000 in 1933, not counting more than 100,000 who had lost the dole because they had been out of work beyond the prescribed term of two years; and of the employed about one-fifth worked on short time.

The Socialists, when in power, had disestablished the Church; in Vienna they had entirely laicised the schools, and had eliminated the practical consequences of the Catholic interdict of interconfessional marriages. Vienna, once a stronghold of European Catholicism, appeared to be becoming a city of free-thinkers. During the first decade of the Republic some 150,000 people had abandoned the Catholic Church, and up to 1934 another 100,000 of them had left without joining another religious community. The militant Catholics were deeply disturbed by such a prospect.

The Socialists, on the other side, were deeply perturbed by the unceasing Catholic attacks on Vienna's social institutions and, especially, on the Socialist housing policy, which was the backbone of the Socialist reconstruction of Vienna.

The Socialists entertained the hope of ending this disquieting state of affairs by winning the majority of the electorate and setting up either a Socialist Government or, at any rate, a coalition led by Socialists.

<sup>1</sup> The decline of the economy of Austria is strikingly demonstrated by the decline of her financial institutions. Vienna was the seat of eleven great banks with a share capital plus disclosed reserves of 1886 million Schillings; the capital had during about five years (by 1925) decreased to 309 million Schillings—that is, to less than a sixth of the former amount.

The Right, which aimed at a fundamental change in power relations between the classes and, above all, at the overthrow of the Socialist Government in Vienna, could see no means of achieving their hopes within the framework of the democratic Republic, for in every election the Socialists invariably gained two-fifths of the total vote in the country and two-thirds of the total vote in Vienna, and had (except in 1920) always been the strongest single party in Parliament. Any amendment of the Constitution, needed to change the balance of class power, required a two-thirds majority. Every election thus confirmed anew that neither of the two main parties had the strength to rule the country arbitrarily against the other. And yet every election only broadened the rift between these two parties and reduced the possibility of their co-operation.

This problem of co-operation was complicated, in the first place, by the social structure of the two main parties.

The Social Democratic Party was a party of the industrial workers. The industrial working class could easily co-operate with the peasant class, because there were no irreconcilable economic antagonisms between them; in fact they co-operated in the provincial governments throughout the life-time of the Republic. But the peasant class had no party of its own. It was represented by the Christian-Social Party, which was also associated with finance and big business; it was the capitalist interests which prevailed in the national policy of that party. The Social-Democrats were only able to co-operate with the Christian-Social Party in the provincial governments, because there peasant influence prevailed. However, in Parliament the Social Democrats were confronted with a party which stood, in the first place, for capitalist interests. A coalition between workers and bankers could not endure.

The perplexity of the problem of co-operation was further increased by the ideological composition of the Christian-Social Party. The peasants were conservative and Catholic; but so long as the Social Democrats did not impose their ideas on the village, the peasant did not mind the Socialist ideology of the workers in the towns; after all, at least eight-tenths of the membership of the Social Democratic Party belonged also to the Catholic Church.

But the peasants had not yet developed an independent ideology; they were used to accept that of the Church, and the Roman Catholic Church in Austria was not merely a spiritual body; it was a political body. It stood not merely for con-



servative principles; it stood for reactionary principles; at a later stage of the development it strove definitely for the destruction of the democratic Republic.

The peasants were thus permeated with a hatred of the Socialists and of the Republic, which did not originate among the peasants themselves, but was grafted on their minds.

Relations between the peasants and workers were poisoned by frequent clashes between units of the *Heimwehr* and of the *Schutzbund* in small provincial towns. Workers were sometimes killed in such clashes, while the accused, tried by provincial juries, were acquitted.

This is what happened, and not for the first time, on July 15, 1927. Socialist workers of the *Schutzbund* had been killed in an encounter with reactionaries, and the accused had again been acquitted. When the verdict of the jury became known next morning the infuriated workers left their shops and marched to the House of Parliament. A veritable affray ensued; the frantic multitude stormed the Palace of Justice and set it ablaze, and the police opened fire and killed ninety-four workers.

This event was the turning point in the history of the Republic, for it revealed, firstly, that the police were firm in their loyalty to the Government; secondly, that the police *did* shoot on workers when ordered to do so, and, thirdly, that the Socialists had no effective measures of defence against brute force.

The Social Democratic Party was not responsible for that disaster; like the Government, it was surprised, and dismayed. When the police opened fire and began their sanguinary hunt for workers in the streets of Vienna the party leaders had, however, to consider means for self-defence. Yet what were the means at their disposal? The *Republikanische Schutzbund*, and the general strike.

The party hesitated to call the *Schutzbund* to arms, because an armed strife between the Government and the working class would inevitably have generated a civil war, which, even if it were victorious for the Socialists, could not, within the framework of the democratic Republic, have changed the real power relations in the State. Seipel's Government was backed by a majority in Parliament; at this juncture even new general elections could not have greatly altered the composition of the House. The Socialist leaders were thus confronted with the grave alternative either of overturning the democratic

structure of the Republic and imposing a working-class dictatorship on the country or retreating. The first alternative had to be dismissed. Quite apart from considerations of principle, it was clear that in face of the internal and external power situation and the precarious economic conditions of the country, a working-class dictatorship could not have lasted for long. But the second alternative implied the recognition of defeat.

The Social Democratic Party chose to call a general strike in order to retrieve its lost position. It was indeed a total strike; not a wheel moved for four days. Yet it was of practically no avail, because Prelate Seipel knew that the Socialists could not, without destroying the ground on which they stood, push the matter further; they could remonstrate, demonstrate, strike, but they could not lay their hands on the core of State power without destroying its democratic structure. And Seipel knew, too, that the maintenance of the democratic Republic was vital for the Socialists, though certainly not for himself. Thus the strike had to be called off without even effecting protection against victimisation.

The massacre of Socialist workers in the heart of Red Vienna on July 15, 1927, and the unavailing general strike during the following days, broke the spell of the invincibility of the Social Democratic Party. And as the Republic was wanted by none but the Social Democrats, the counter-revolutionaries now knew that it would be possible to smash it by smashing the Social Democrats; what was required was merely audacity and recklessness.

In these days of humiliation and defeat for the Socialists, Prelate Seipel embarked openly on a campaign for the introduction of a Fascist regime in Austria. He went from meeting to meeting to preach the need for replacement of the democratic Republic by a corporative structure of society after Mussolini's pattern; that conception was even incorporated into the papal bull *Quadragesimo anno* of 1931, to which Seipel contributed. From October 1928 onwards the *Heimwehr* four times attempted a Fascist *coup de force*.

The tension was further accentuated by the terrific slump in 1930; Austria's only remaining big bank, the *Kredit Anstalt*, broke down in Spring 1931, causing utter economic disaster. That *débâcle* coincided with the staggering success of the Nazis in the general elections in Germany. In the ensuing provincial and municipal elections over the greater part of Austria, on

April 24, 1932, the Nazis scored their first impressive gains in the Republic. They attained them solely at the expense of the Christian-Social Party. While the Social Democrats retained their strength undiminished, the Christian-Social Party lost almost half of its Vienna seats, and was reduced to a minority of 30 per cent in Lower Austria and Salzburg.

It now became quite clear that Prelate Seipel, by fostering Clerico-Fascism, had in fact only bred Nazi-Fascism. He was the architect of the counter-revolution in Austria; but Hitler reaped the benefit of his labour.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION

THE COUNTER-REVOLUTION in Austria achieved its aim not by a constitutional trick, as in Germany, but by an undisguised *coup d'état*. Democracy in Austria was abolished not by a sudden single stroke, as in Germany, but in successive stages in the course of eleven months.

It is important to note this difference in methods and procedure, for it provides the clue for the ascertainment of the reaction of the Austrian people to the elaborately designed destruction of the democratic Republic.

It is, for example, certainly legitimate to question whether the majority of the German people really desired the abolition of democracy and the establishment of Nazi-Fascism, and whether many of those who polled for the Right on March 5, 1933, did foresee the consequences of their votes. Outwardly, the procedure of putting Hitler into power was constitutionally correct. The President of the German Republic, Field-Marshal von Hindenburg, entrusted Hitler, as the leader of the largest party, with the task of forming a government and seeking parliamentary majority in a new general election, and Hitler took most solemnly the oath of loyalty to the democratic Weimar Republic. Hindenburg (or at any rate his advisers) knew beyond any doubt that the Nazis, once installed in office, would abolish democracy, in accordance with the principles they had frankly proclaimed. Hindenburg, therefore, by handing over power to Hitler committed perjury and high treason, and his observance of constitutional rules was a felonious deception.

The German people, deceived by the guardian of their Constitution, went to the polls a few weeks later. They were intimidated by a reign of terror; they were scared, confused and bewildered by the Reichstag fire attributed by the Nazi propaganda to the Communists; the Communist Party, which mustered more than 6,000,000 votes at the previous election,

was dissolved, the Press of the Left muzzled or suppressed. Yet the Nazis obtained merely 44 per cent of the votes cast; they were able to secure a majority in Parliament and *plein pouvoir* only by forming a Coalition Government with the representatives of the Right parties. Also the Act according the Hitler Government full power did not rescind Hitler's oath to the Weimar Republic nor did it abolish parliamentarianism; it did not proclaim as its purpose the establishment of Fascism (although most of the deputies who voted for it were probably aware of its implication); according to its wording, it was designed solely for the economic reconstruction of the country, and was to remain valid for four years. However, as soon as Hitler attained dictatorial power, howbeit by a constitutional ruse, the Constitution ceased to exist and the voice of conscience was silenced.

In Austria the demolition of the democratic Republic took 326 days. That well-conceived work of destruction began on March 15, 1933, when the Chancellor, Engelbert Dollfuss, cordoned off the House of Parliament with police in order to prevent its session, and it ended on February 12, 1934, when he arrested the Social Democratic representatives, both in Parliament and in the provincial governments.

During this whole period scarcely a single day passed without the promulgation of governmental decrees, every one of which was in flagrant breach of the constitutional laws: the House of Parliament was closed, the censorship of the Press introduced, trial by jury abolished, the (Austrian) Habcas Corpus Act abrogated, the Constitutional Court annulled, concentration camps established, one-third of the income of the Viennese Municipality confiscated, workers' associations suppressed, the traditional May-Day procession prohibited.

The Government thus undermined, step by step, the fundamental laws of the Republic, yet left it in existence until February 1934, at least in name, though not in essence. The Government's arbitrary legislation, dishonestly promulgated in a sickening atmosphere of ambiguous legality and foul treachery, rescinded the law and yet pretended to respect the law; it subverted the Republic and yet did not abolish it until the appointed day. Meanwhile public opinion had a certain latitude of expression, however restricted; people were still free to assemble in meetings, and the papers could still voice their opinions.

### *The Psychological Conquest of the Republic*

How, then, did public opinion in Austria react to this progressive extirpation of liberty? The Catholic Press gloated over the disruption of the Republic, the big Viennese papers, once champions of Liberalism, condoned it, the men of letters ignored it, the judges without protest executed unlawful decrees, the lawyers kept silence. The Social Democratic Party and its Press, fighting with its back to the wall, alone remained to defend democracy.

A respite of 326 days was given to the Austrian people to search their hearts, to ponder the implication of these moves, and to reflect upon several aspects of Fascism. It has to be remembered that, in the hour of decision—in February 1934—the nature of Fascism in all its inhumanity and cruelty was already known to the Austrian people for almost a year.

Until the very day when Dollfuss smashed the Social Democratic Party and set the seal of doom on the Republic, nothing, however distasteful, had been done that could not have been retrieved. But the intention of the Government was glaringly clear to everyone. It was manifest that its unconstitutional legislation aimed at nothing less than the entire abolition of the Republic, and that, after its fall, arbitrary will would be substituted for the law, despotism for self-government, and that freedom of mind would come to an end—as had been so evident in Germany.

Was public opinion alarmed? Did it protest against the designs of the Government? Did it urge them to stop this disastrous policy, to restore the rights of Parliament and to seek in an agreement with the Social Democrats a firm basis for a democratic regime?

The Dollfuss Government had a majority in Parliament of one vote only; it was certainly not able to carry on without broadening its basis. But the Social Democrats were, at this juncture, willing to co-operate with any government, whatever its composition, if pledged to the maintenance of the Republic. The Social Democrats were the strongest single party in the country; they represented 42 per cent of the total electorate of Austria. A Coalition Government of the Christian-Social Party and the Social Democrats would have been backed by a solid two-thirds majority in Parliament and would have been able to ward off the Nazi peril from the country. While certain liberties would have had to be suspended for those who exploited them

for the destruction of liberty, the fundamentals of the Republic would have been maintained.

That was the Social Democratic proposition. It was rejected with one voice. The Christian-Social Party, its peasant and town membership alike, refused even to discuss it, the non-party Press scorned it, the common people, except the Social Democratic workers, remained unmoved at this crisis; they apparently thought that the maintenance of the Republic was worth neither effort nor sacrifice.

It now became manifest that the Republic was earnestly desired by none but the Social Democrats. The Social Democrats formed a considerable section of the people, 1,500,000 in numbers; but they were still a minority. Two million and a quarter were conspicuously hostile or, at best, indifferent to the Republic.

How came it that the Republic inspired one section of the Austrian people with passionate enthusiasm and another section with venomous hatred?

For the Social Democrats, the Republic was the first great step towards the fulfilment of their dream of equality and freedom. The workers had been the under-dogs of society throughout the Hapsburg reign. The Republic had abolished their inferior status; they now had equal political rights for the first time in their history. In consequence of political equality, Labour came into power wherever it mustered a majority. Thus for the first time in their history they governed big communities, such as Vienna and a number of other cities and towns. Until the emergence of the Republic the common worker had been tolerated only in the workshop; now he found a wide field of spontaneous, creative activity. His stature grew, his life became fuller, and however poor the country was and however devastating the toll which unemployment exerted, there were some precious things left, worth cherishing. To its members the Christian-Social Party was a political machine; to the Social Democratic worker his party embodied his aspirations for a new and happier world. To deprive him of his party was to deprive him of half his life; to deprive him of the Republic was to degrade him again to an inferior status and to deprive him of all opportunity to develop his spontaneous creative powers. Therefore he wanted the Republic.

But the motives of the Socialist workers did not appeal to other classes of society. The aristocrats had been divested of their privileges; they had no reason to love the Republic. The

middle classes of the towns also felt that their social status had been reduced, because the status of the working class was raised to the same level as theirs. As the number of the citizens counts in a democracy, and not their property, the workers now ruled there where the middle classes had ruled before. They had been Liberals so long as they were excluded from power; they lost their taste for Liberalism when they were edged from power by the rising working class. In Britain, France, and to a smaller extent in Germany, Liberalism was a tradition of the middle classes from which they hesitated to part. In Austria the Liberal tradition of the middle class was extinguished long before the Republic came into being. And as the Republic invested Labour with power, they began to abominate liberty, to loathe democracy and, above all, to hate Social Democracy, which endeavoured to realise the social implications of liberty and democracy. It is significant of the spirit of the Austrian middle class that of their three most noted writers who lived to see the death struggle of the Republic, Stefan Zweig kept non-committal silence, Karl Kraus glorified the fall of the Republic, and Franz Werfel lent the prestige of his name to the head of the Clerico-Fascist regime.

The peasants had lost nothing by the Republic; in fact they had, like the workers, gained in social standing. They had no reasons to hate the Republic. But the Church had permeated their minds with the hatred for Socialism, "the Anti-Christ". In 1918 they had clamoured for the Republic; in 1933 they clamoured for its abolition. They did not believe that they would lose anything by doing away with the Republic. Freedom of mind had not much meaning for the peasant, nor did his sense of democracy greatly transcend his village, where he was, of course, a stout democrat. He had perhaps, though to a far less degree, also a certain democratic interest in his province. But he loathed to see the workers wielding power in Vienna and the industrial towns. He conceived the idea of the totalitarian State, as expounded by Seipel and afterwards realised by Dollfuss, as a regime which would divest the Social Democrats of power, as had been done in Germany. That was exactly what he wanted.

Thus when Prelate Seipel died in 1932, he had already won the psychological battle of the counter-revolution. The majority of the Austrian people either hated the Republic or were indifferent to it; the Social Democrats were isolated.



### *The Strategy of the Counter-Revolution*

But the Social Democratic Party, though isolated, and although its spell of invincibility was broken, was still very strong. The loyalty of its members was unflinching. The *Republikanische Schutzbund* was well armed, excellently trained and imbued with a high fighting morale. The workers on the railways, in the power-stations, mines and factories were prepared to answer a *coup d'état* with a general strike. Dollfuss knew that the Socialists would honour their oath to fight in defence of the Republic; he still hesitated to strike.

With Hitler's triumph in Germany, however, the social power relations in Europe changed. January 30, 1933, marked the most tremendous political earthquake the human race has ever experienced in its history. A nation of 65,000,000, highly educated, second to none in science, technology, philosophy and in the fine arts, had submitted to a regime of barbaric despotism without armed resistance. It was true that two-fifths of the people had bravely fought the approaching peril for years; they had still protested at the polls in the teeth of the reign of terror on the eve of their doom. But ultimately they had submitted without an armed rising. There were powerful organisations of the Left: the Social Democrats, the Communists, the *Reichsbanner*; there were trade unions mustering millions of members; there were the democratic Catholics, whose loyalty to the Republic had been borne out by their unflinching participation in the reconstruction of republican Germany for fifteen years. And yet machine-guns, truncheons and concentration camps proved to be a stronger force than the minds of men.

This was a mighty encouragement to the reactionaries all over the world. In Austria the counter-revolution now saw its opportunity. Ten days after Hitler's victory at the polls Chancellor Dollfuss closed the House of Parliament and embarked on a cunningly conceived war of nerves against the working class, designed to undermine its will and destroy its means of resistance.

Immediately after Hitler's seizure of power in Germany the Austrian Social-Democratic Party issued a solemn declaration stating that the Austrian working class would never submit to a Fascist dictatorship without an armed resistance.

Dollfuss' strategy was cleverly designed to avoid a frontal attack until he had sufficiently undermined the power of the

working-class to resist. After eliminating Parliament by a shameless trick, he progressed in minute steps, every one of them an insolent violation of the law, yet none of them in itself of a magnitude to warrant civil war.

In the course of eleven months he succeeded in breaking the fighting power of the working class, in devitalising its fighting morale, in partly disarming the *Republikanische Schutzbund* and in paralysing its units by the sudden arrest of their military leaders on the eve of the *coup d'état*. Then he struck on the assumption that he would meet no resistance. Even so, he did not avert the battle. Though he had greatly disorganised the working class, its militant *élite*, however small, did fight to the death. The number of casualties on both sides in the street-fighting from February 12 until February 16, 1934, was officially stated to be 239 dead and 718 wounded; the real figures for killed and wounded has never been established. Nine Socialists were hanged; one among them, with his bowels torn out by bullets, had to be carried on a stretcher to the gallows. Further executions were stopped by a joint intervention of the British and French Governments. Dollfuss announced that the cost of his action had amounted to 62,000,000 Austrian schillings (about £1,811,000), and to cover it he imposed a security tax on all incomes over 2,400 schillings (about £70), and a special levy upon individual Social Democrats.

At the very moment when Dollfuss' guns opened fire against the newly erected housing-blocks, defended by members of the *Republikanische Schutzbund*, the Mayor of Vienna was arrested and the Viennese County Council dissolved. The Social Democratic Party and the trade unions were suppressed and outlawed; their leaders, as well as all Socialist members of Parliament and the provincial governments, were imprisoned, the papers and funds of the entire Labour movement were confiscated. On mere suspicion 38,132 political arrests were carried out and 106,319 houses were searched between March 15, 1933, and December 31, 1934.

### *The Clerico-Fascist Constitution*

Dollfuss had guilefully prepared his *coup d'état*. He had always protested to the Social Democratic leaders that nothing was remoter from his mind than the idea of a dictatorship; that whatever he did now, his measures should be understood

as temporary emergency measures to ward off the Nazi danger; and that a satisfactory solution of the crisis would certainly be found one day. But while he thus talked he carried in his pocket the draft of the Constitution to be imposed after his *coup*.

This Constitution was proclaimed on May 1, 1934, together with the ratification of a Concordat with the Vatican. Its preamble stated: "In the name of God from whom all right proceeds, this Constitution is issued for the Austrian people for its Christian, German, Federal State on a corporative basis." Austria ceased to be a Republic; her official title was changed from "Federal Republic of Austria" to "Austrian German Federal State", and the Hapsburg double headed eagle was restored to the new coat-of-arms.

The Constitution was based on the papal encyclical *Quadragesimo anno*. Austria was to be a Catholic Corporate State. The Federal Diet replacing the democratic Parliament was composed of seven corporations: (1) Agriculture and Forestry; (2) Industry and Mining; (3) Trades; (4) Commerce and Transport; (5) Finance and Credit; (6) Liberal Professions; (7) Public Services and Railways. The members of the Federal Diet were to be appointed by the Government. The power in the State rested with the Chancellor alone. The Federal Diet had merely an advisory function; it was entitled to approve or reject measures, but not entitled to alter or to suggest anything. It assembled under the presidency of the Hapsburg General, Prince Schönberg-Hartung, in November 1934 for the first time—half a year after the promulgation of the new Constitution. The majority of its fifty-nine members were noblemen, priests or landowners, State officials and industrialists; the workers were not represented. In order to emphasise the capitalist character of the new regime, one of the first actions of the Government was the discontinuation of the municipal housing activity.

The Clerico-Fascist counter-revolution had not, however, fully achieved its aim. It had abolished the democratic Republic and had replaced it by a dictatorship, submissive to the two Romes; it had restored the privileges of the Catholic Church, the aristocracy and the bureaucracy; it had elevated the status of the possessing classes and reduced the working class to an inferior position. It had put back the clock by a century. But it was not able to crown its triumph with a restoration of the House of Hapsburg. The French Government

intimated, and the Czech Government officially stated, that all the armies of the Little Entente would be mobilised the moment a coronation of the Hapsburg Pretender was attempted in Vienna or Budapest. The Austrian Government had to face the fact; yet they demonstrated their noble intentions: they restored Crown property, confiscated by the Republic for the benefit of disabled soldiers, to the Hapsburg family, and some hundreds of local authorities conferred on Archduke Otto, Pretender to the Throne, the freedom of their villages and small towns, especially in the Tyrol.

### *The Clerico-Fascist Interlude*

The Clerico-Fascist dictatorship was doomed from the beginning. No crystal-ball was needed to foresee that if democracy in Austria were once destroyed the country would be unable to resist the onslaught of Nazi Germany. It was to be expected that Hitler would mobilize the inexhaustible financial, political and diplomatic resources of his country for the conquest of Austria. What was required to withstand his attack was in the first place the firm unity of the people. But the Austrian people were split into three factions: Social Democrats, Nazi-Fascists and Clerico-Fascists.

Engelbert Dollfuss, however, and, after his assassination in July 1934, Kurt von Schuschnigg, relied entirely upon Mussolini for protection against Hitler's designs. But this reliance was based on erroneous assumptions. The first was that Hitler Germany would always remain disarmed. But Hitler started secret rearmament immediately he came to power, and introduced conscription openly on March 16, 1935; Germany was to become the biggest military Power of the Continent. The second erroneous assumption was that the balance of power would always remain as it was on the day of the *coup*. But only ten months later, on December 5, 1934, the fighting at Wal Wal between Italian and Abyssinian troops heralded an entire change in the power constellation of Europe. Mussolini, by his aggressive war against Ethiopia, antagonised Great Britain and, though to a lesser degree, France and the whole of Europe, except Hitler-Germany. Italy was isolated and forced to buy Hitler's friendship at any price. The price Hitler demanded and Mussolini had to pay was, of course, Austria.

The conquest of Austria was, indeed, always foremost in

Hitler's mind. Firstly, because he wanted to take his revenge on Vienna for the deep humiliation he had suffered there in his youth. He hated Vienna, "the giant city, as the personification of incest", as he frankly confessed. Secondly, because he wanted to realise Georg von Schönerer's Pan-German dream and to go down into history as the unifier of all Germans. But, above all, because he discerned the supreme strategical position of Austria, commandingly astride several of the great European cross-roads. Once he dominated Austria, Czechoslovakia would be encircled and forced into the German orbit, indefensible Hungary and Rumania would be at his mercy, and Russia's southern flank exposed. Hitler clearly perceived that Vienna was the key to German hegemony in Europe.

But Hitler's conquest of Austria could be achieved only with the consent, or at least with the benevolent neutrality, of the Austrian people themselves. Hitler could not have risked an open war against Austria. Firstly, because a war of Germans against Germans would have been repugnant to his own people. Secondly, if the Austrian people were as earnestly resolved to defend their independence as, say, the Swiss people, an open aggressive war against Austria might have embroiled Germany in a major conflict. The annexation of Austria by force would have been considered by Czechoslovakia and France as a challenge to their security. Both Powers had concluded alliances with Russia in May 1935, with a view to their common defence against Hitler-Germany. If Austria were to resist a German attack, this Three-Power group might have intervened in her defence.

But armed resistance against Hitler-Germany was to be expected only of a people which prized liberty higher than economic advantage, and humanity higher than nationality. The Austrian Social Democrats renounced their aim of union with Germany<sup>1</sup> when Germany became a barbaric despotism, and they preferred poverty in freedom to the glittering economic advantages offered by the Fascist Third Reich.

But the majority of the Austrian people had forsaken the cause of democracy; they had in part complied with the loss of their liberty. After this Austria's independence, too, was lost. Moral forces in its defence could have been mobilized only on the grounds of defending Democracy against Fascism. But since Austria had also become Fascist, there was no moral basis

<sup>1</sup> In a joint declaration of the Executive and of the parliamentary group of the Social Democratic Party, issued on May 13, 1933.

for the defence of the country's independence. The difference between Clerico-Fascist despotism and Nazi-Fascism was merely one of degree and not of essence. Austrian nationality was in itself no basis for the defence of Austria's independence, because no such thing had ever existed, and Dollfuss himself, and Schuschnigg still more, never tired of emphasising the German character of the "Austrian German Federal State". As Austria was a German State, and a Fascist State as well, why then oppose union with Fascist Germany? So long as Austria and Germany were democracies, the Austrian Social Democrats demanded union with Germany; now, since Austria and Germany had become Fascist countries, the fusion of both was demanded by the Nazi-Fascists and ultimately not resisted by the bulk of the Clerico-Fascists.

Dollfuss' idea was to oppose Nazi-Fascism by Clerico-Fascism. But it was very soon revealed that Catholicism had lost its political preponderance among the peasant youth. It was able to permeate them with Fascist doctrines; it was not able to immunise them against Nazi-Fascism; they flocked in masses into the Nazi camp. But even the more serious Catholic Fascists began to wonder when they learned that the Holy See had concluded a Concordat with Hitler only half a year after he came to power, and that the Catholic population of the Saar, urged on by their bishops, had almost unanimously voted for the union with Nazi Germany (January 15, 1935). If it was no sin for German Catholics to serve and for Saar Catholics to join the Nazi regime, why should it be a sin for Austrian Catholics to do the same?

Dollfuss attempted to fortify his Clerico-Fascist propaganda by an appeal to the patriotism of the Austrian people. "Stand for your fatherland," he urged them, "unite in the fatherland front!" And he dissolved even his own party—the Christian-Social Party—and made the *Vaterländische Front* (Front of the Fatherland) the social basis of his dictatorship.

But the assumption that the Austrian people had ever known a fatherland was the greatest fallacy. If there was something like patriotism in the Monarchy, it was merely a dynastic, not a national patriotism; a sentiment of loyalty to the Crown, not a patriotic sentiment embracing all "the Kingdoms and Countries represented in the Imperial Council" (which was actually the official title of the western half of the Hapsburg empire, commonly called Austria). The fatherland of the Tyrolians was the Tyrol; of the Viennese, Vienna; of the Carinthians,

Carinthia, and the affinity of, say, a Viennese and a Tyrolian was far less than that of a Tyrolian and a Bavarian.

The absence of an Austrian patriotism became strikingly manifest during the life of the Republic; almost all the provinces wanted to part from each other and, above all, from Vienna. Carinthia declared from the onset that Carinthia belonged to the Carinthian people only, and warned the Federal Government in Vienna to keep its hands off Carinthia. The Tyrolian Diet declared their country an independent State, severed relations with the Austrian Republic (on November 21, 1918) and dispatched their own embassy to Switzerland in order to obtain recognition by the Western Powers. Six months later the Voralberg Provincial Diet charged their government with the task of seeking the admittance of the Voralberg into Switzerland; in a plebiscite (on May 11, 1919) four-fifths of the Voralberg people voted for union with Switzerland. Two years later the Tyrolian Diet made another attempt at divorce from Austria by separately joining Germany, and in a plebiscite (on April 24, 1921) almost the total electorate (144,342 against 1,794) voted in the affirmative. A few weeks later the Diet of Salzburg followed the Tyrol's example, and in this plebiscite 103,000 against 800 votes were cast for the union with Germany. The Diet of Styria followed suit (on May 31, 1921). Only France's stern protest prevented the self-dissolution of the Austrian "fatherland". The Austrian people had known only sentiments of parochial or, at best, regional patriotism; the sentiment of a national patriotism was always alien to them.

A genuine Austrian patriotism might have evolved if the experiment of the Republic had been a success. If, in the first place, the peasants, like the workers, had found in the Republic satisfaction for their creative urge, provision for their well-being, and an opportunity to develop their own ways of life, then Austria would have become the fatherland of the peasants, as it was indeed of the workers. Then it might even have been possible to make Austria a going concern, though on a rather low standard of living. The hundreds of thousands unemployed in the industrial centres of the Republic adhered to it in spite of the deprivations they had to suffer, because they felt that they had a stake in the Republic, and because the Republic and all it stood for was an expression of their self-assertion and dignity. Had the Catholic peasants been imbued with the same enthusiasm for Democracy and the same passionate hatred of

Fascism as the Socialist workers were, they would have been prepared for sacrifices in combatting Hitler-Germany.

The Clerico-Fascist propaganda, spread for the most part by the Roman Catholic Church, had, however, systematically destroyed the spiritual and political basis of the Republic. It fostered the peasants' aversion to Vienna; it enhanced their prejudices, incited hatred of the workers and undermined the co-operation between peasant and worker. It vilified democracy, maligned parliamentarianism and inculcated the peasants with nationalism and anti-Semitism. It appealed to men's meaner instincts.

But the negative aspects of Fascism—anti-Marxism, anti-Democracy, anti-Humanitarianism, anti-Semitism—were preached also, and far more boldly, by the Nazis. Yet Nazism was able to offer also some positive aspects: for instance, national unity and economic prosperity. Clerico-Fascism had only national humiliation to offer, by subjecting Austria to the hegemony of the Italians, whom they despised, and the economic distress under which they groaned. Small wonder that ultimately Nazi-Fascism prevailed over Clerico-Fascism.

### *The Nazi Conquest of Austria*

The Clerico-Fascist dictatorship lasted for four years and one month (from February 12, 1934, until March 11, 1938). Less than six months after it was established Hitler attempted to seize Austria by a *putsch* (on July 25, 1934); he came within an ace of success. He now thought it desirable to humour the outraged opinion of Europe. He disclaimed any participation of the Reich in this action and brazenly disowned the assassins of Dollfuss. But at the same time he organised some thousands of Austrian Nazis, who had sought refuge in Germany, into an "Austrian Legion" as storm troops for the conquest of the country. The *putsch*, carried out by Police troops, with the President of the Police as the chief accomplice of the conspiracy, revealed that the limbs and heart of the State machine were infected by Nazism. Hitler resolved to bide his time.

The history of the Clerico-Fascist dictatorship from this *putsch* onwards is the story of disgraceful attempts to come to terms with the Nazi dictatorship. The Austro-German Agreement of July 11, 1936, made Austria a mere vassal of Hitler. Austria was pledged to subordinate her foreign policy to that of Germany and to side with Hitler in the event of war. While the



Social Democrats remained outlawed, the Nazis were permitted to revive their movement, cloaked under a mutual agreement as "German Nationalists", and a Nazi, Colonel von Glaise-Horstenau, entered Schuschnigg's Government as Home Secretary. In the Rome Protocols, concluded between Italy, Hungary and Austria only a few months before (on March 23, 1936), Austria's allegiance to Italy was once more confirmed. The Austro-German Convention of July 11, 1936, thus created for Austria a dual allegiance: an allegiance to Fascist Germany as well as to Fascist Italy. The contours of the Fascist axis were already visible.

Hitler had re-occupied the Rhineland on March 7, 1936; he started at once to build the "Siegfried Line". Two years later he believed himself strong enough to strike at Austria. He was confident that the "Siegfried Line" would be able to withstand or, at any rate, delay any French intervention, if France should go so far. But he believed that she would not intervene, because he assumed that Great Britain would condone the rape of Austria. Great Britain had honoured Germany by concluding with her a Naval Agreement (June 18, 1935), and had almost with good grace accepted Hitler's breach of the Locarno Treaty, barring Germany from the Rhineland. Herr von Ribbentrop, Hitler's Ambassador in London, was *persona grata* at St. James and the darling of English society. A small but powerfully influential clique of British Conservatives wanted to see Nazi Germany strong, to form the spearhead of Conservative Europe against Bolshevik Russia; it welcomed the extension and re-enforcement of Germany's influence in Central and Eastern Europe. Great Britain had yielded to Italy's conquest of Abyssinia; moreover, she had refrained from interference with Italy's and Germany's intervention in Spain. Hitler had reason to believe that Great Britain would ultimately acquiesce also in his conquest of Austria, if the Austrian people themselves did not resist. And Hitler assumed that, without Britain's support, the Franco-Czech-Russian Pact would hardly become operative, provided he were to seize Austria by a lightning stroke and face Europe with a *fait accompli*.

The success of Hitler's adventure depended on its rapid conclusion and the avoidance of a bloody clash between the German and Austrian forces. Austria is, like Switzerland, comparatively easy to defend, because it is protected by almost impregnable mountains. Hitler's army had only a single road

at its disposal, and was therefore unable to throw forces swiftly into the battle-line and to attack on a wide front. The Austrian army would have been sufficiently strong at this juncture to withstand the German army; since the introduction of conscription by Schuschnigg (on April 1, 1936), it was composed of all males between the ages of eighteen and forty-two, and mustered some 100,000 first-class troops, as they later demonstrated under Hitler's command in Norway, Greece, the Crimea, at Stalingrad and in the Caucasus. If fighting had developed and had but lasted a few days, the European Powers might have intervened.

But Hitler felt absolutely certain that his march into Austria would meet with no serious resistance. Nazi propaganda had penetrated the villages and country towns, the Civil Service, the police, and even the army. The peasants, like the workers of Austria, had never before been German nationalists; but Clerico-Fascist, no less than the Nazi propaganda, had made the peasants national-minded. Hitler was convinced that the bulk of the peasants and the lower middle class of the cities and towns would, far from hitting back, enthusiastically welcome his seizure of the country.

There was only one implacable enemy whom Hitler had to take into account: the Social Democrats in Vienna. They had fought in February 1934; although their movement was suppressed, they had carried on a lively underground struggle for four years. On Schuschnigg's return from his visit to Hitler at Berchtesgaden on February 14, 1938, when the crisis appeared to be approaching its climax, the Social Democrats had offered their support in the final fight against Hitler. But Schuschnigg yielded without fight. While German troops entered Austria on March 12, and were received with frantic joy in the villages and towns through which they passed, hundreds of German war planes circled low over the roofs of Vienna, to threaten and intimidate the Viennese workers. The latter, unarmed, and deserted by the Austrian "Patriots" who had the arms, could not fight alone. Thus there was not even the slightest attempt to defend Austria's independence. The *Vaterländische Front* had enrolled 2,000,000 members; none of them was prepared to fight, still less to die for the fatherland.

Within an hour after Schuschnigg's abdication the face of Vienna had entirely changed. The main roads in the centre of the city were flooded with a vast crowd, carrying Nazi flags,

the policemen had put on the Swastika arm-bands they had in their pockets, Vienna—once Red Vienna, later Catholic Vienna—now appeared to have become Nazi Vienna. Austria's Cardinal Archbishop, Innitzer, immediately ordered his flocks to offer prayers of thanksgiving for the bloodless course of the great political revolution.

A few days later Hitler made his triumphal entry into the capital of the conquered country. Cardinal Innitzer, who had given orders for all the church bells in the city to be pealed at Hitler's approach, assured the conqueror that the voice of his blood had urged him to join in the universal jubilation of the population, and he concluded his solemn declaration with the fitting salute: "Heil Hitler!"<sup>1</sup> Without further delay the mob threw itself upon the Jewish people in the city, in order to celebrate this great historical event with a pogrom which did not spend itself until 200,000 Jewish men, women and children,<sup>2</sup> first robbed of all their belongings, had been slaughtered or driven into exile.

That was the coping-stone set upon the triumph of the counter-revolution and the finale of Austria's history.

<sup>1</sup> In a special appeal to the priests and the faithful of the Catholic Church, Archbishop Cardinal Innitzer declared: "The priest and the faithful must support without reserve the Greater-German State and the Fuhrer whose fight against Bolshevism and for the power, honour and unity of Germany has been destined by Providence."

<sup>2</sup> Of the more than 10,000 Jewish children who had remained in Vienna until the day of Hitler's triumph, only 115 have survived.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE SECOND REPUBLIC

THE SECOND Austrian Republic which emerged from the chaos of the Second World War in the Spring of 1945 has no more than its name, frontiers, geographical conditions and natural resources in common with the First. Its international position, trade relations, political structure, composition and, above all, the psychology of its population have undergone such profound changes since the fall of the First Republic that one might be justified in saying that, with the Second Republic, something new is in the making.

It appears as if, for the first time in its history, the Austrian people had become imbued with a strong German nationalistic conscience.

In 1918, when the Austrians were confronted with the task of constructing a State of their own, the sentiment of German nationalism was, in the main, confined to a comparatively small stratum of the middle classes, chiefly in the provincial cities and towns. The political party of the German nationalists—the Pan-German Party—was always weak in numbers (though not in influence, as the Christian-Social Party was compelled to rely on its support). However, the Christian-Social Party, which had grown up in the struggle against Schönerer's Pan-Germanism and was submissive to the policy of the Vatican, became the strongest antagonist to the union with Germany. The patriotic sentiment of the peasants had not yet transcended the boundaries of the province, and the Roman Catholic Church fostered this parochialism. The industrial working class had in the course of two generations developed a strong tradition of internationalism in its hard struggle against nationalistic trends. To peasants and workers alike the question of the union with Germany was merely a matter of economic and political expediency. Both supported the claim to union for the same economic reason: in order to escape the special distress of their country, though for different political reasons: the workers in order to join the German revolution, the peasants to join the Bavarian counter-revolution. In both cases

the motive for the union with Germany was free from genuine sentiments of German nationalism.

The Austrian people have now been exposed to the most intense Nazi propaganda for a period of fifteen years, which can be divided into two phases: the first, lasting from 1930 until 1938, during which the Nazis struggled for power in the country; the second, lasting from 1938 until the collapse of Germany in the Spring of 1945, during which Austria was a province of the totalitarian Nazi State.

The first period ended with the glaring triumph of Nazism, crowned by Cardinal Innitzer's servile submission to Hitler. It should be noted that the Cardinal's statement reflected not merely loyalty to the new head of the State, but a sentiment of German nationalism hitherto unknown to the Austrian Roman Catholic episcopate. This sentiment was strikingly expressed in a Pastoral Letter of the Austrian Roman Catholic Church on Hitler's plebiscite, issued on March 28, 1938. The Pastoral Letter, which was ordered to be read in all Austrian Churches, declared: "We, the bishops of the Austrian Church, declare with the deepest conviction, and of our own free will, that we recognize with joy that the National Socialist movement has achieved and is achieving outstanding work in . . . social policy, particular (among) the poorest of the people. We are also convinced that the danger of an all-destroying and godless Bolshevism was averted by the labours of the National Socialist movement. These labours will in the future be accompanied by the heart-felt blessings of the bishops, who will exhort the faithful in this direction." And it went on to declare that "on the day of the plebiscite it will naturally be for us bishops, as Germans, to declare ourselves for the German Reich, and we expect from all faithful Christians a sense of their debt to their race."<sup>1</sup> This attitude reflected Hitler's total victory over the souls of the Austrian Catholic peasants and Church-minded townspeople.

<sup>1</sup> The parish priests were further authorised by the Archbishop to hoist the swastika flag—the Archbishop had already ordered the swastika flag to be hoisted on the high spire of the Cathedral of St. Stephen—and to peal the church bells at the conclusion of Hitler's plebiscite address to the Austrian people (at Vienna on April 9). The Cardinal, on the following day, ostentatiously queued at the polling booth and gave the Nazi salute as he entered. Hitler's plebiscite yielded a pro-*Anschluss* majority of 99·5 per cent of votes cast. As this plebiscite was held under Nazi auspices the figure may appear exaggerated, though it leads to the conclusion that a large majority of the Austrian population did actually vote for the union with Germany.

The second period ended with the catastrophic ruin of the Nazi regime. But it is difficult to ascertain to what extent the liquidation of the Nazi regime has also eradicated German nationalism from the minds of the people.

### *The Experience of Being German*

The most important fact to remember is that the Austrian people have now experienced the advantages of belonging to a big national State for the first time in their history. The Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was a multi-national State, and although the Austrian Republic was a homogeneous German State,<sup>1</sup> it failed to enlist the loyalty and devotion of its citizens; they did not regard this artificial structure of St. Germain as their permanent home.

The first advantages which accrued to the Austrian people (except the Jews) as a result of their incorporation into Germany were indeed overwhelming. Hitler came to the Austrian people as a Santa Claus. The Austrian Schilling was rated at two-thirds of the Mark—that is, at least 10 to 15 per cent higher than its proper value. Not only the capitalists, but also the workers benefited from this over-valuation. The purchasing power of wages rose, and at the same time unemployment sharply declined, to disappear entirely in the course of less than a year. This was a relief for which the workers had craved since the birth of the Republic.

The Republic had toiled in vain to create economic prosperity. The year 1929 was the peak of prosperity; the industrial production had reached about 95 per cent of the pre-war level and about 80 per cent of the post-war capacity. And yet no less than 17 per cent of the insured workers—about 200,000 in number—were unemployed. Czechoslovakia, with a population more than twice as large as that of Austria, had in the same period only 42,000 unemployed. In the years of world economic depression the proportion of unemployed industrial workers rose to 47 per cent.<sup>2</sup> Almost every other industrial worker was out of work, and about one in four, who were

<sup>1</sup> The Austrian Republic contained small national minorities, as 80,000 Czechs in Vienna, 40,000 Slovenes in South Carinthia, 42,000 Croats and 10,000 Magyars in Burgenland. 97 per cent of the Austrian population were, however, Germans.

<sup>2</sup> The peak of unemployment was reached in February 1933, when more than two-thirds of the insured workers were either on the dole or assisted under a very meagre old-age pension scheme.

fortunate enough to keep their jobs, worked less than forty-eight hours a week, and in many cases earned scarcely more than they would have received on the dole. There were tens of thousands of young men who, at the age of twenty-two or twenty-three, had never had a chance to work, and there were tens of thousands of men in their forties who had already lost their last chance of again obtaining employment. In the 'thirties there was hardly a single working-class family in the country which had not at least one member out of work.

Incorporated into the vast Greater Germany, Austria was rid of the scourge of unemployment. There was now work and bread for everyone and, perhaps, also an aim in life.

Moreover, as Hitler intensified his industrial preparations for war, employers competed with each other for the good will of the workers. Many Austrian workers went to Germany, where wages were higher,<sup>1</sup> at the same time wages were rising in Austria.

Hitler, in his struggle for the soul of the Austrian worker, cunningly supplemented the method of material bribery with those of political corruption.

In Germany, Hitler had treated the Social Democrats as his inexorable arch-enemies: he straightway threw some thousands of them into concentration camps. In Austria he was at great pains to reconcile them to the regime. The Jewish working-class leaders were, of course, also sent to concentration camps. Most of them died in the camps; as, to name a few, Robert Danneberg, the Secretary of the party, Heinrich Steinitz, its devoted lawyer and chief counsel for the accused Socialists tried by Dollfuss after his *coup*, and Käthe Leichter, an outstanding member of its National Women's Executive; very few survived, such as Karl Mantler and also Benedikt Kautsky, who was liberated by Allied troops after seven years of imprisonment. Yet Hitler had reserved the concentration camps for the Jewish Socialists.<sup>2</sup> The "Aryan" Social Democrats were

<sup>1</sup> According to the International Labour Office investigations, comparing the real wage level in various countries, the wages in Germany were higher by 25 per cent than in Austria.

<sup>2</sup> After the first honeymoon of the Nazi regime had passed, the Gestapo, of course, also sent many gentile Socialists and Communists of the rank and file to prison and concentration camp, and a considerable number of them died there or were executed, as my old friend Anton Bönisch (it is to his memory that this book is dedicated); but none among the more known leaders of the Social Democratic Party was persecuted. Only after the attempt on Hitler's life, on 20 July, 1944, was Karl Seitz arrested and thrown

solemnly assured by the Nazi Mayor of Vienna that they had nothing to dread; they need not even change their conviction, he said, but should only wait and judge the new regime according to its merits. And in order to demonstrate the "Socialist" character of the new era which was to commence, Social Democratic municipal workers, dismissed by the Clerico-Fascists for their participation in the February fighting, were reinstated with great ceremony, the Viennese house-building activity, discontinued by Dollfuss, was resumed, concerts, theatre performances, holiday travels for workers were organised on a large scale. In Dollfuss-Austria the workers had had neither freedom nor work and were treated as the lowest estate of society; in the Greater Germany of Adolph Hitler, though they also had no freedom, they had at least work, good wages and a little fun, and were told that they were actually the first estate in society.

The lower middle class was still better off. Many thousands of its members had helped themselves to the looted property of the Jews of Vienna. Greater still was the number of those who received jobs or businesses formerly held by Jews, or jobs in the machinery of the State or Party. The peasants, pampered by the regime with all sorts of loans and privileges, also participated in the general prosperity. They could now sell all their products in the wide German markets at profitable prices, and in the holiday seasons the villages were flooded with German tourists, thus augmenting the peasants' income.

Thus peasant, worker and business-man experienced the benefit of living in a big national community.

The Austrian honeymoon lasted for a year and a half; then came the war. The war was certainly a misfortune; but it also had compensations, at any rate for a time. Prosperity increased; parcels with silks and furs arrived from Norway, France and the Ukraine, and while Germany proper was already placed on smaller food rations, Austria was treated with special consideration; while German towns were already smashed to dust, Austrian towns were still spared. Austria became the big air-raid shelter of the Reich. Only in the fifth year was the horror of the war brought home to the Austrian people.

The Austrian people have been part of the German Reich

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into a concentration camp; he was liberated by the American forces. Adolf Scharf, the present chairman of the Socialist Party, and General Theodor Körner, the present Socialist Mayor of Vienna, were also arrested at that time, but soon released.



for seven years. They have experienced its prosperity, some of them shared its ideology, and all of them its final misery. It is impossible to estimate the psychological effects of all these impressions. The attitude of the Austrian people towards Hitler's war was not markedly different from that of the German people. Some of them fought in Hitler's war with inner conviction, some of them with an inner protest. Apart from the activity of partisans of various nationalities organised by the Yugoslavs in the Austrian mountains, resistance to the war was in Austria of the same order as it was in Germany: in both countries there were courageous Socialists, Communists and Catholics who fought and died for the cause of freedom; in both countries the formidable State machinery of coercion prevented the rise of mass resistance movements.

During the last stages of the war, and immediately after its termination, the zealous profession of hatred for Nazism was in Austria as general and sincere (or insincere) as it was in Germany. In Austria this sentiment often found its expression in hatred for Germany or the Germans. It is probably true that at that time most of the Austrian people were in favour of separation from Germany and the re-establishment of an independent Austria. Yet it has to be noted that this sentiment was not entirely determined by proclaimed anti-German sentiments. The desire to escape from the dreaded fate of a defeated Germany, the hope for preferential treatment for an independent Austria, the apathetic submission to the *force majeure* of the victorious Powers, were certainly further elements in the apparent composition of the present anti-*Anschluss* psychology.

But this anti-*Anschluss* sentiment is by no means an expression of a specific Austrian patriotism; it is even often mixed with a scepticism as to the viability of Austria as an independent political State and economic entity. Some Catholic politicians would like to see Germany broken up and Catholic Austria federated in some way with Catholic Bavaria or, still better, with all Catholic Western Germany—a conception which animated the Vatican and the Catholic reactionaries in the years after Germany's defeat in 1918. Their sentiment of "anti-Germanism" is, in fact, merely the expression of their old aversion to Protestant Prussia.

The old Social Democratic Party had, when Hitler seized power in Germany, suspended its demand for the *Anschluss*, yet upholding the principle of democratic self-determination; the re-instituted Socialist Party had, however, relinquished this tenet.

When Hitler seized Austria, the Socialist underground movement cherished the hope that the Nazi regime in Austria, as well as in Germany, would be overthrown by a working-class revolution embracing all German lands (*Gesamtdeutsche Revolution*); from this revolution, it was assumed, a Socialist commonwealth would emerge, naturally uniting Austria with Germany.<sup>1</sup> As the Socialists considered German imperialism to be a function of German monopoly capitalism, and not a function of the "national character" of the German people, they saw no reason for objecting to, but many reasons for desiring, a union of the two German countries after they had destroyed imperialism and monopoly capitalism. Indeed, the Socialist Greater Germany, born from an all-embracing revolution, was the aim generally held by the Austrian Socialists.

But the Nazi regime was not overthrown by a revolution of the German and Austrian workers, but by the arms of the Allied nations. Austria was separated from Germany and declared an independent State by a decision of the victorious Powers. So the re-instituted Socialist Party abandoned also the aim of a Socialist Greater Germany.

Yet Social Democrats, faithful to their belief in internationalism, will see in the workers all over Germany—whether in the Rhineland or in Prussia, whether Catholic or Protestant—their closest comrades, whose destiny they have shared. They will accept the separation of Austria from Germany as an inescapable political sequel of Hitler's criminal policy, but will probably regard the economic consequences of the separation with grave concern.

### *Changes in the Psychological Structure*

More recent events indicate the present psychological structure of the Austrian people. Dr. Karl Renner, the architect of the First Austrian Republic, also became the architect of the second. Under his premiership a provisional government was formed, the Constitution of the Republic was restored, and the population was free to join any of the three political parties admitted by the Allied Control Council: the Socialist Party (former Social Democratic Party), the People's Party (former Christian-Social Party) and the Communist Party. Finally the people were called upon to express their free

<sup>1</sup> See Friedrich Adler's Epilogue to this book, p. 144 f.

opinion in a general election (which took place on November 25, 1945).

Fifteen years had elapsed since the last general election. During these fifteen years the people had experienced first the Clerico-Fascist, then the Nazi-Fascist tyranny. How have these experiences affected their minds?

From the results of the general election it by no means appears that the republican idea has emerged triumphantly from the bankruptcy of Fascism.

The Socialist Party, which has always been the strongest single party in the Republic (except in 1920), dropped—owing to the merging of all former non-Socialist parties into one single party—to second place (with seventy-six out of 165), though its proportional strength of votes increased by about 3 per cent, compared with the last election in the old Republic. The Communists, who were hitherto unable to obtain a single seat, had gained four, chiefly at the expense of the Socialists.

But the most remarkable result of the general election was the clear-cut victory of the former Christian-Social Party. It has to be borne in mind that this was the party which fomented hatred against the Republic and which ultimately killed it: it was the party of Clerico-Fascism. Yet this party, thoroughly compromised, obtained, owing to the absorption of the other non-Socialist parties, an absolute majority in the National Council as well as in all provincial Diets, with the exception of Vienna and Carenthia. Its majority in the National Council is certainly small: eighty-five seats out of 165. It has further to be noted that since no other non-Socialist party was allowed to exist, the People's Party received the votes of the entire Right, formerly divided among several parties. But as the People's Party became the refuge of the Nazis, its potential strength might be bigger than would appear from the last election, because almost half a million Nazis who were disfranchised last time will have regained the right to vote next time. On the other hand, there were hundreds of thousands of war prisoners not yet repatriated who had no opportunity to vote last time, but who will influence the outcome of the next general elections.

The People's Party is in its present composition the embodiment of everything reactionary and counter-revolutionary in the country; it is in fact the most reactionary of all the Catholic parties in Europe. The M.R.P. in France and the Christian Democratic Party in Italy are centre parties, of

course with a right wing; but in both these countries there are still parties to the right of the Catholics, and the Catholic Party in Belgium at least contains a fairly strong and well-organised Labour wing, restraining reactionary tendencies within the party. But in Austria there is no other party to the right of the People's Party; it is *the* party of the right.<sup>1</sup> It has retained its Clerico-Fascist elements, and has in addition obtained the support of the former Nazis. It has actually merged the supporters of the former Pan-German Party, as well as of the Nazi Party with those of the Christian-Social Party into a single party, and has thereby strengthened its urban wing and reduced the influence of its peasant element.

The survival of the First Republic was dependent on co-operation between the industrial working class and the peasants; because that co-operation failed, owing to the preponderance of the urban wing of the Christian-Social Party, the Republic failed. In the Second Republic the working class is confronted with a party which in its social composition and spirit contains more elements to hinder permanent co-operation than before. For the spirit of the People's Party it is significant that Cardinal Innitzer still wields a formidable power as its spiritual inspiration. The political head of the Party, Federal Chancellor Figl, in his first declaration of the new Government at the opening session of the newly elected Parliament (on December 28, 1945), ostentatiously avoided the pronouncement of the word "Republic"; moreover, at a later public manifestation he proclaimed that he considers himself but the successor of Schuschnigg. Other leaders of the People's Party even expressed in solemn addresses their deep sympathy with the political conception of Dollfuss and Schuschnigg. The *débâcle* of Fascism has by no means caused a change of heart. "To-day", stated the Socialist Vice-Chancellor Adolf Schärf at a Conference of the Socialist Party, "in the Tyrol you may get into trouble only because you are a Socialist or a man from Vienna. Important officials of the People's Party have been shown to be implicated in Monarchist propaganda. Others refuse to accept orders, issued by the Government, only because they are issued from Vienna or by a Minister who is a member of the Socialist Party." It has also

<sup>1</sup> It also contains, of course, some genuine Catholic-democratic individuals—as for instance Prelate Hauser and Leopold Kunschak—but they are not organised in a group; there is no distinct democratic Left wing within the People's Party.

to be noted that the People's Party included in the Provisional Government a most prominent Fascist leader, Herr Julius Raab,<sup>1</sup> and that after the election the Allied Control Council had to veto admittance of three ministerial candidates because of their former association with the Nazis.

A further indication of the prevailing spirit of the Austrian people is the attitude of their political parties to the Jewish question.

One-tenth of the population of Vienna was Jewish, and the Jewish contribution to the intellectual, economic and social life of the city was not small. Since the 'eighties they have been foremost in letters, medicine and in music, and second to none in historiography, sociology, jurisprudence and architecture; without Gustav Mahler, Arthur Schnitzler, Siegmund Freud, Hugo von Hoffmannsthal, Max Reinhardt, Heinrich Friedjung—to name a few at random—little of Vienna's cultural splendour would have survived. The Austrian working-class movement is especially indebted to leaders and teachers of Jewish origin for what was best in its traditions. Yet perhaps in no city of the German Reich were the pogroms against the Jewish people so spontaneous, so general and so brutal as in Vienna. The Austrian people were always inclined to indulge in the

<sup>1</sup> Herr Julius Raab, though he is no longer a member of the Government, is one of the most influential personalities in the People's Party. He was the leader of the *Heimwehr* in Lower Austria. At a big parade of his troops in Korneuburg, on May 18, 1930, he together with the Tyrol *Heimwehr* leader, Dr. Steidl, took a solemn oath from his followers to destroy the democratic republic and to reconstruct the Austrian State on a Fascist basis (the notorious *Korneuburger Eid*). "We strive for power over the State; we reject democracy and Parliament; we stand for the principles of the Leadership State . . ."—so the *Korneuburger Oath* run. As a Clerico-Fascist he opposed the Nazi wing of the *Heimwehr*. When the Nazis seized power in Austria they took their revenge and threw Herr Raab together with Schuschnigg and a number of other leading Clerico-Fascists into a concentration camp; among the Catholics, persecuted by the Nazis, were Herr Dr. Figl, the present Chancellor, Dr. Funder, the former editor of the leading Clerico-Fascist daily, *Die Reichspost*, and Herr Schmitz, the Clerico-Fascist Commissary of Vienna, appointed by Dollfuss after he had deposed the elected Socialist mayor, Karl Seitz. Some of the Clerico-Fascist victims of Nazi persecution—as for example Dr. Funder and Schmitz—underwent apparently a sincere change of heart under the influence of the lesson they learned from Fascism in action; others retained in their hearts all the prejudices and hatreds by which they had been animated before, though they are now surrounded with the halo of martyrdom that crowns every victim of Nazi persecution. Of course, they hate the Nazis—in Germany; as for Austria they still adhere—as some even frankly proclaim—to the conception of Dollfuss.

passion of anti-Semitism, and the decade of furious anti-Semitic propaganda—the decade from the triumph of Clerico-Fascism until the *débâcle* of Nazi-Fascism—has undoubtedly strongly fostered that passion.

Yet after the Austrian people had witnessed the unspeakable consequences of their attitude, the least that might have been expected was, if not a gesture of atonement for the death of tens of thousands slaughtered in concentration camps, at any rate a gesture of kindness and encouragement to those who survived as refugees in foreign countries. They have been citizens of the Republic; they have been ruined, looted and driven out, merely for being Jews. They were the first victims of the Nazi creed which every party in Austria is now eager to condemn. The most elementary impulse of decency would have suggested that they should be invited to return to their own country. But no responsible leader, whatever his political shade, concealed his displeasure with the prospect of seeing the Jews returning from their exile.<sup>1</sup>

The anti-Semitic attitude of the Austrian Catholics is part of their political tradition; yet it is indeed an amazing novelty when professed by Austrian Socialists, for although there was an undercurrent of moderate anti-Semitic feeling among some Socialist individuals in the old Republic, it has hitherto never come into the open.

But this change of attitude becomes immediately intelligible if we consider the new psychological situation with which all Austrian parties are now confronted. Nazi-Fascism has penetrated the Austrian population more deeply than it might appear on the surface. There was hardly a family in Austria without at least one of its number associated with the Nazi movement. The avowed Nazis were disfranchised at the first general election in November 1945; their number amounted to nearly 500,000. They will be enfranchised for the next general election. At the time of the first general election almost 1,000,000 Austrian prisoners of war were not yet repatriated; they have since returned, and it is estimated that about 500,000 of them—young people who were more susceptible to Nazi indoctrination than their elders who remained at home—shared the Nazi creed; they, too, will go to the polling-booths

<sup>1</sup> In the first message, sent from liberated Vienna by the leaders of the reborn Austrian Socialist Party, to their comrades living abroad as refugees (most of them Jews) it was bluntly stated that the return of Jews to Austria in great numbers would be viewed with "a certain apprehension".

at the next general election. Thus almost a quarter of the whole electorate of the next general election consists of voters who were politically or spiritually connected with the Nazi movement. This fact is bound to affect every political party, including the Socialists and Communists, for every party is striving to enlist as many voters as possible, even if the voters have been Nazis for a time. None of the Austrian parties could, of course, for reason of international policy afford to compromise openly in fundamental principles; every Austrian party confesses its adherence to democracy. But every party appears to be very anxious to take into account the anti-Semitic feeling spread under Nazi domination, and yields to this for opportunist motives.

The Austrians have twice in the lifetime of a generation been visited by the darkest tragedy that can befall a people. In 1918 as well as in 1945 after a devastating war they were cast out from a wide political unit and reduced to an impotent entity. Their first disastrous fall, of course, caused convulsions, yet also an uprising of a new spirit. Some old values were shattered, yet some new ones emerged. The catastrophe, however heavy its blow, engendered new moral forces.

In the second catastrophe of the Austrian people the redeeming feature of a moral resuscitation is apparently absent. The very foundation on which the new State is to be built is a deception. The separation of Austria from Germany is officially justified, not as a measure of security which the victorious Powers deemed indispensable in view of the experience with the imperialist Third Reich, but as a means of self-realisation of the Austrian people as a particular nation as distinguished from the German. Every Austrian, however, knows that an Austrian nation is non-existent; there has never been one. Every Austrian further knows that he is a German by common language, common culture, and even common origin. The Austrians of to-day were the German nation among the multitude of the nations of the Hapsburg Empire. They proclaimed the union with Germany when the Empire fell; they were again members of a German Federal State when the Republic fell; many of them welcomed enthusiastically Hitler's entry into Austria and professed fervently their German nationality until the German Reich cracked. But when it seemed convenient they suddenly discovered that they had never been proper Germans, but that they had always been a particular species. Now the Austrian Communists proclaim

that "the German nation is to us an alien nation, the German culture is to us an alien culture",<sup>1</sup> and Catholics and Socialists eagerly respond to this slogan. Thus an "Austrian nationality" came into being not, as all the other nations in the world, as the result of generations' growth under a common destiny, but as an act of expediency and policy of State.

It might be possible to realise the need for the separation of Austria from Germany and the establishment of an independent Austria, for the sake of European security. The Socialists in particular always held that national interests must give way to international interests. If the separation of Austria from Germany appears to be an essential condition for the settlement of Europe (as it undoubtedly is at this juncture of history), it must be honestly accepted. But what must not be accepted is a falsehood. The Austrian people might ardently endeavour to reconstruct their country as an independent State; they might perhaps develop in the course of generations an identity somehow different from the identity of the German people (just as the German Swiss). What the Austrian people, however, cannot do without losing self-respect is to secede not only politically but also emotionally from the wider cultural body of which they are part, and solely for material advantages forsake those with whom they share their cultural heritage.

But that is precisely what they are actually now doing. The Austrian people are now pleased to play, with an eye to the Allies, the role of the "good boys" as distinct from the "bad boys" who inhabit Germany; they wish to be considered by the victorious Powers as the innocent victims of German aggression just as, for instance, the Czechs or Poles. The Austrian Communists even propagate the theory that the German Socialists were as intensely imbued with the imperialist spirit as the German Fascists, and they point to the fact that the German "working class as such has as little as the other sections of the German nation offered a serious mass resistance" against Fascism and has "taken part in Hitler's war of conquest till its end just as the rest of the German nation".<sup>2</sup> It is true that the German working class offered no mass resistance to the Fascist dictatorship once it was established, but neither did the Austrian working class, for the very simple reason that an

<sup>1</sup> Otto Langbein, *Unsere Stellung zu Deutschland, Weg und Ziel*, January 1947, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup> Otto Langbein, *ibid.*, p. 23.



organised mass resistance to the formidable Fascist machine of coercion was possible neither in Germany nor in Austria.

The assertion that the Austrian people were less inclined to indulge in Fascism than the German people is in glaring contradiction to historic evidences. Austria was a Fascist State even before it was incorporated into the Nazi-Fascist State. The majority of the Austrian people accepted gladly the fusion of Fascist Austria with Fascist Germany.<sup>1</sup> Austria as well as Germany were conquered by Fascism—and Fascism is an internal, not a foreign force. The first victim of Fascism was not Austria, but Democracy and Socialism in Austria and in Germany. The Austrian Socialists and Communists who have so valiantly withstood Fascism are certainly entitled to be respected as victims of Fascism; but this is true also for the German Socialists, Communists and the genuine anti-Fascist section of the German middle class. Those Austrians, however, who desired the extirpation of Democracy and Socialism and who indulged in the debasement of humanity are as little free from the responsibility for the Fascist regime as the German Nazis themselves.

It is true that the Austrian people as a whole wished for Hitler's war as little as the German people as a whole. But all of the people in Austria as well as in Germany who have aspired to the establishment of a Fascist regime and have sustained it have to bear, of course in degrees, a collective responsibility for all the enormities which the Nazi system has perpetuated. This is in most cases not a legal responsibility, yet it is in all cases a moral responsibility. There is a collective guilt with which are burdened not only the genuine Austrian and German Fascists, but also even those Austrians who might not have been members of the Nazi Party, yet who have in their hearts, from indolence, cowardice or opportunism, acquiesced in, or even connived at, the Nazi atrocities against the Jews, or the foreign workers in their midst, or against the conquered peoples in occupied countries. Only the consciousness of this

<sup>1</sup> "The workers turned away (after 1934) in resignation from their own State and came to the conclusion that if Fascism were unavoidable, the anti-Clerical variety of the Germans was preferable to that oriented toward Italy and the Catholic Church. That meant, in terms of foreign policy, that four years later the mass of the workers allowed annexation to take place without objection and also they were soon taken in by the dazzling successes of Hitler."—Dr. Karl Renner, *Denkschrift über die Geschichte der Unabhängigkeitserklärung Oesterreichs und die Einsetzung der provisorischen Regierung der Republik*, p. 15.

guilt can redeem it: without a confession of this guilt—individually and collectively—there can be no moral regeneration.

The people in Austria as well as in Germany are reduced to abject misery and deepest humiliation. If the disaster is to be repaired the process must start with a moral reconstruction. Only if there is a universal awareness that by submitting spiritually to Fascism the cause of humanity has been deserted will it be possible to eradicate the spiritual roots of Fascism. The people in Austria, no less than the people in Germany, are confronted with this task. But the process of moral reconstruction is ill served if it starts with the transfer of responsibility from the Austrians to the Germans. Yet the deeper purpose of the differentiation between the Austrian and German nationality, which the Austrians are now so anxious to uphold, is to free themselves from any responsibility.

It might have been expected that at least the Austrian Communist and Socialist would realise that the German Communist and Socialist bore no responsibility for Nazism and all it implied. They all suffered Hitler's persecution together; all the closer should be their mutual fraternal relations. Yet the Austrian Socialists like the Communists take ostentatious care to emphasise their estrangement from everything in Germany, including the German working class. Relations between the Austrian and German Socialists provide a severe moral test. If the expression of solidarity is wanting in the hour of our brothers' greatest need, then international solidarity loses its deeper meaning as an heroic ideal; it becomes a matter of calculated expediency. It is profitable to profess solidarity with the strong; it is however nobler and in harmony with Socialist ethics to practise solidarity with the weak.

In the first Republic Austrian Socialism was distinguished by its steadfastness in upholding its principles; it never yielded them to expediencies. Its abhorrence of ambiguity and its earnestness in the pursuit of its ideals evoked the strength of moral force which gave the movement its wonderful cohesion. The pressure of circumstances which gave birth to the second Republic produced an atmosphere of opportunism. The doom which the Austrian people have suffered and the instinct of self-preservation in the terrific struggle for survival in which they are embroiled have apparently vitiated their nobler senses.

It thus appears as if the Austrian people would have to begin

the reconstruction of their own State with a spirit more adverse to the noble ideals of sincerity and humanity than it was twenty-eight years ago. Indications that a genuine moral revolt is surging up against the unspeakable barbarity of Fascist tyranny are conspicuously absent. The appalling revelations in the Nuremberg trials are regarded by most Austrian people as an affair of the people in Germany, ignoring the fact that the proportion of Nazis in the Austrian population was not smaller than that in the German, that the Austrian concentration camp at Mauthausen near Linz was the worst torture chamber throughout the Greater Reich and that the Deputy of the Gestapo, Ernst Kaltenbrunner—second only to Hitler and Himmler as the cruellest of the tormentors of mankind—was by no means a solitary Austria figure in the infernal pantheon of Nazism.<sup>1</sup> In Germany the Catholic Party (except the Bavarian People's Party) and a section of the middle classes, quite apart from the Social Democrats and Communists, sincerely fought Fascism, at any rate until Hitler's seizure of power, and the Roman Catholic Church in Germany has never submitted to Nazism. In Austria the Catholic Party, now again in power, already submitted to Fascism at a time (in 1927) when the Nazi movement in Germany was still insignificant, and the Austrian Roman Catholic episcopate hastened to express their devotion to the Nazi State.<sup>2</sup> There are, however, no signs of heartfelt regret for the wrongs done and fateful errors committed; nor was a resurgence of republican enthusiasm noticeable amid this spiritual corruption.

### *The Economic Problem*

But while the moral force of Austria is shattered, the national volume of intelligence decreased (owing to the expulsion of the Jews) and ignorance heightened (owing to the Nazi monopolies of forming public opinion and of education), the difficulties in the task of reconstruction are immensely

<sup>1</sup> According to Vishinsky (Reuter, March 13, 1947), half of the German war criminals were of Austrian nationality. Up to September 1, 1946, there were in Austria 536,660 registered National Socialists, of whom no fewer than 22,729 had been members of the S.S., and 61,198 members of the S.A.; this amounts to more than 8 per cent of the whole Austrian population. No fewer than 135,000 Civil Servants had to be dismissed or suspended from service, according to a statement of the Austrian Foreign Secretary Gruber.

<sup>2</sup> See page 112.

greater than those which confronted the architects of the first Republic.

The first Republic started with considerable economic assets carried over from the times of the Monarchy; the second has no such assets. The war of 1914 left the country unscathed; the material destruction which the country has suffered in the recent war and the depletion of its industrial equipment and livestock under the title of German assets have assumed catastrophic proportions. The first Republic was able to inspire enthusiastic devotion and readiness for self-sacrifice of at least the working class; disappointment with the Russian troops of occupation, the triumph of the reactionary People's Party and the untold deprivations the workers have to endure have dissipated the ardour with which they welcomed the rebirth of the Republic.

Yet the task of surmounting the staggering difficulties of reconstruction requires enormous intellectual and moral efforts.

The world surrounding Austria has changed entirely. This change will most profoundly affect the economy of Austria.

The old Republic received a quarter of its national income from abroad. But its balance of trade was always negative; exports amounted to only two-thirds of imports (66 per cent in 1927, which was one of the boom years). The remaining third of the imports were covered by loans, foreign investment and revenue from tourist traffic. An analysis of Austrian imports also shows that they are fairly evenly divided between livestock and foodstuffs (37 per cent), raw materials (27 per cent) and manufactured goods (33 per cent), and that little can therefore be spared in view of the rather low standard of living of the population.

In order to balance her trade the new Austria will have either to increase her exports by a third or to decrease her imports by a third, unless she is able to obtain loans, or to absorb foreign investments, or greatly to increase her tourist traffic.

Since no considerable loans, investments or increase in tourist traffic can be expected, in view of the exhausted economic conditions in the world, the economic future of Austria will be largely determined by her capacity to export.

What were the chief export markets of the old Republic? Austria's biggest customer was Germany, who took more than 18 per cent of the total Austrian exports. The next in order were States which are now in the Russian orbit: Czecho-

slovakia, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Rumania and Poland; these five States took another 39 per cent of Austria's total exports. Thus 57 per cent <sup>1</sup> of the income of the export industries was derived from these six countries.

The present economic ruin of Germany will deeply affect Austria's economy. Germany will not be able to buy anything for many years to come. Germany was also the largest foreign investor in Austria; it is very unlikely that Germany will be able to invest in foreign countries, at any rate during the period of her own reconstruction. The income of Austria's tourist trade was mainly derived from Germans; they came at the rate of 100,000 a year (the last figure of German visitors to Austria, in 1932, before Hitler imposed the 1000 Mark blockade, was 98,000).<sup>2</sup> Now the German people will for long years be too impoverished to be able to afford holidays in foreign countries. Germany was, furthermore, the biggest foreign labour market for Austrian workers; her de-industrialisation will, however, cause mass unemployment at home. It is impossible to estimate the economic losses Austria will sustain as a result of Germany's economic disaster; they certainly represent a considerable proportion of Austria's national income.

But Austria's future exports are also jeopardised by the new grouping of Powers in Central and Eastern Europe. The trade policy of Hungary and Rumania is directly, that of Czechoslovakia, Poland and Yugoslavia indirectly, controlled by Russia. Austria's trade relations with these five States will greatly depend on Austria's political relations with the Soviet Union.

This new grouping of States places Austria on the horns of a dilemma. The export outlets for Austria lie in Russia and in the vast belt of States in Central and Eastern Europe, incorporated into the Russian orbit. Their import requirements are almost unlimited, their ability to pay in wheat, coal and various types of raw materials beyond question. If foreign relations were determined only by economic considerations, Austria would have to seek an eastern orientation.

But an orientation of Austrian foreign policy eastwards conflicts with the sentiments of a large section of her population.

<sup>1</sup> The trade statistics are those for the year 1927.

<sup>2</sup> The estimated average income from tourist traffic during the four years 1926-29 was 244-54 million Schillings; that covered about one-quarter of the trade deficit (1,055 million Schillings).

The Viennese workers genuinely welcomed the Red Army as liberators, and many of them visualised the future of Austria closely bound up with that of the Soviet Union. The rigour of the Russian occupation has, however, destroyed many of these sympathies. The peasants and members of the middle classes, permeated with "anti-Bolshevik" hatred by Clerical as well as Nazi Fascism, would be still less inclined to support a policy linking Austria with Russia. Yet should Austria lose, in addition to the German markets, the markets of the five States within the Russian sphere of influence, her economic situation would become most acute. For even the pre-Hitler volume of Austria's exports, plus production for home consumption, was too small to provide work for more than four-fifths of the industrial population. Austria has more than to retain, or to recover, her pre-Hitler volume of exports; she has to increase it considerably in order to make the Republic a going concern.

For even if Austria were fortunate enough to recover her former volume of exports, a serious problem with which the old Republic has struggled would still remain unsolved: the problem of full employment.

### *The Problem of Reconstruction*

The utter failure of the first Republic to solve its economic problems is not solely to be explained by its particular economic structure. It is certainly true that it was a peculiar structure, as it was a fragment broken away from an originally integrated economic mechanism. This special condition may account for the initial crisis of the Republic, but not for its permanent crisis.<sup>1</sup> For some European States with a similar structure prospered quite well while Austria groaned in her distress.

<sup>1</sup> The economic history of the first Republic is a record of the progressive decline of industry. For instance, the level of production in the heavy and engineering industry was as follows:

	1913	1929	1933	1935
Pig iron . . . .	100	76	15	32
Steel . . . . .	100	71	25	41
Iron ore . . . .	100	93	13	38
Engineering . . .	100	69	22	32

For this comparison with the pre-war level of 1913 we chose the years 1929, peak year of industrial prosperity, 1933, the year of the lowest point of the industrial depression, and 1935, when the world at large had already recovered from the slump and Great Britain, for example, had already surpassed the level of employment of 1920. The general level of employment in

The most striking case of comparison (to which Lord Layton has referred in his Report to the League of Nations) is Switzerland. Her geographical position is almost exactly the same, her economic resources are even more limited than those of Austria. In proportion to the population her cultivated area is smaller and her dependence on foreign food supplies is greater than that of Austria. She possesses no coal resources, whereas Austria supplies nearly one-third of her requirements from her own mines. She possesses no oil, whereas Austria now produces 1,000,000 tons a year—400,000 tons in excess of her domestic needs. Austria now occupies the third place among the oil-producing countries of Europe. Whereas Austria is self-supporting in iron-ore, and has one of the largest deposits in the world of magnesite (of special importance in the manufacture of light metals), Switzerland depends entirely on foreign resources. Austria is equipped with water-power just as generously as Switzerland. Even the tourist earnings of Switzerland, though bigger than those of Austria, do not suffice to restore the balance, for they constitute less than 7 per cent of the Swiss national income. On the other hand, Switzerland's rural population constitutes a larger percentage of the total population than that of Austria. Yet in spite of the fact that Switzerland is lacking in some of the most important raw materials, that country had in 1913 the highest average accumulated wealth per head of population of any political unit in Europe and in 1927 a national income per head of the population nearly twice as big as that of Austria.

It is true that Switzerland's prosperous present-day economy is the result of long evolutionary processes during which she has developed highly specialised trades. Clearly, what Switzerland had achieved in the course of 200 years Austria could not accomplish within twenty.

Austria, compared with other countries, was (according to the International Labour Office Index with reference to 1929) as follows:

	Austria	Czechoslovakia	Germany	Great Britain
1920 . . .	100	100	100	100
1934 . . .	69.8	75.0	85.5	99.2
1935 . . .	66.8	76.6	90.6	101.5
1936 . . .	64.6	82.4	97.2	106.7
1937 . . .	67.4	90.0	104.3	112.3

The index shows that while Czechoslovakia, still more Germany and, above all, Great Britain, had recovered from the world slump of 1933, Austria's industry continued to decline.—Frederick Hertz, *The Economic Problem of the Danubian States*, from which also the statistical dates in the following footnote have been taken.

But it should be noted that in the course of the twenty years during which Austria was an economic entity little effort, commensurate to the needs, appears to have been made towards an adaptation to her specific economic conditions—except in Vienna.<sup>1</sup> Her industry steadily dwindled, though there was some improvement in agriculture. The economic policy of the Government was guided by the purely capitalist principles of doing no more than to maintain a sound currency. On one side there were hundreds of thousands of unemployed and on the other undeveloped resources of water-power and oil. Austria's output in oil was, for instance, about 20,000 tons a year before Hitler initiated the exploitation of Austrian oil-fields on a large scale. It is now 1,000,000 tons. But the Austrian Government did not then deem the extension of oil production a profitable business proposition, in view of the cheapness of the imported oil, and allowed thousands of workers to remain idle rather than violate the capitalist principle that investment must be justified by prospective profit. Nature has generously endowed Austria with water-power containing a potential force of 6,000,000 horse power; but only one-sixth of that wealth is harnessed. More than half the Austrian railways still use coal (which has to be imported) and there are hundreds of thousands of homes in the country without electric light. But the need for the exploitation of the available natural resources conflicted with vested interests,

<sup>1</sup> The greatest achievement of the Republic, thanks to the initiative of Vienna, was the harnessing of part of the water power. Up to 1930 newly installed power-stations increased electric power by 868,300 h.p. In the field of agriculture 34,300 hectares of unproductive land were made productive by drainage from 1927 to 1934. That area was about 10 per cent of the total land capable of being reclaimed. Yet Austria's agriculture lagged far behind that of Switzerland, as the following comparative figures show:

		<i>Yield in mq. per hectare (average 1925-29):</i>	
		<i>Wheat</i>	<i>Potatoes</i>
Austria . . . . .		15.10	123
Switzerland . . . . .		22.0	150.20

A comparison of the livestock per hectare of these two countries shows:

		<i>Cattle</i>	<i>Pigs</i>
Austria . . . . .		49.62	33.81
Switzerland . . . . .		73.25	42.08

The average milk production per cow was in Austria 2,100 l., in Switzerland 3,030 l., or bigger by 45 per cent. Measured in money, Switzerland's agriculture produced per hectare three and a half times the value reached by the Austrian peasant.



and since Austria was always ruled by capitalist governments (except for two years), vested interests always prevailed.

But it appears that Austria is too unstable an economic entity, and that the emergency with which she is confronted is too great, to leave her destiny to the vagaries of private enterprise. What that country perhaps more than any other needs is a planned economy aiming at full employment. And just because the gravity of her problems is of such an awe-inspiring magnitude, political, intellectual and moral standards must be commensurate to meet them. Planned economy requires, in the first place, ample control on the part of the State of the natural resources of the country and of its key-industries. In Austria it should be easier than anywhere else to nationalise the key industries, as they became the property either of the Hitler State or of Nazi industrialists. As Austria has to begin from scratch, ingenuity and audacity in devising and carrying out bold schemes after the pattern of Russia's Five Year Plans will be required.

But as yet, three years after the end of the war, no plans for the economic reconstruction of Austria have been discussed by the Government. The idea that the Austrian people should sustain themselves by their own exertion appears to have not yet entered the minds of the men responsible for the conduct of public affairs. The British Government are constantly urging their people to put all their labour resources and skill into an all-out effort for such an increase of production, especially of export goods needed to meet the national bill for imported food and raw materials, and so to secure a decent standard of living of the people; they have organized the whole national economy in view of this aim. Likewise Poland, Yugoslavia and Hungary have devised and actually put in action far-reaching economic plans aiming at the speediest development of the industrial resources of these countries. Nothing of the kind has as yet been done in Austria. The Catholic Party, dominated by vested interests, is stubbornly adverse to nationalisation and planned economy; it has based its economic policy purely on the hope of perpetual financial aid, which it expects the Powers to furnish—those Powers, in the first place the United States, which are for political reasons interested in the prevention of Austria's collapse. But even the Socialist Party, though it pressed for the nationalisation of certain industries and championed planned economy, has not yet given the country a national plan of economic reconstruction, whether of Socialist

or even capitalist character. The sentiment of national self-respect is apparently absent. The prevailing conception seems to be that as the Austrian State is a creation of the victorious Powers, it is up to them to provide the means for its preservation.

But such a spirit is scarcely able to engender that strength of will and determination required for the remaking of Austria's economy. Certainly, the labour of generations might be needed to make Austria as flourishing a community as Switzerland is to-day. Yet it should not be impossible to create, even in our life-time, such conditions in that country as would provide every citizen of the Republic with work and some measure of social security. But Austria must cease to be a predominantly capitalist country, and the grip of capitalist greed and corruption must be broken. If guided by a great vision, it might then achieve on a national scale what Vienna under Socialist inspiration achieved locally.

Yet what is required above all in the work of reconstruction is the fervent devotion of the citizen of the Republic to a common end.

If it were possible to permeate the Republic with the same thriving sense of selflessness, social responsibility and dignity as was found in Vienna, then it might not merely regain the respect, but also enlist the aid of the civilised world. We should not allow ourselves to forget that were it not for the admirable achievements of Vienna and the brave resistance offered by the Viennese workers to the onslaught of Fascism on February 12, 1934, Austria would have fallen into the same contempt as did Germany.

Thus, if the Republic becomes more than a name (as it was and still is), if it becomes a reality, in its deeper social and human meaning—a home of free and equal men and women with aims and hopes in life—then there might be an Austria of to-morrow, a true Republic able to evoke in its citizens that sense of affection which the Austrian workers once felt for Vienna.

### *Between East and West*

The Austrian people are, however, not yet the masters in their own homes. The country is still occupied by the four Great Powers and has become part of the political battlefield in the contest between East and West. Austria has been "liberated", but she is, in fact, still in bondage; she was proclaimed

an independent State, but she is nonetheless dependent both politically and economically on the mercy of her foreign lords. Thus the Austrian people are not yet allowed to fashion their common life under their own responsibility. All their attempts at the reconstruction of the country have been frustrated—even systematically by the Russians who wish to see Austria incorporated into the political and economical orbit of the Soviet Union, and as Austria resists, they appear resolved to starve her into submission.

Thus the supreme issue with which the Austrian people are still confronted is the attainment of freedom and, at least, of that limited degree of independence permitted to small States in the world of to-day.

The champion of this struggle for freedom and independence is now as ever the Socialist Party. It was distinguished in the past from most of the European Labour Parties by its warm sympathy with the Soviet Union and by its acute understanding of the peculiar historical and social conditions of the rise of the Bolshevik dictatorship. But at the same time it stood firm to its belief in the principles of social democracy and was therefore irreconcilably opposed to the transplantation of the Bolshevik principles into the Austrian Labour movement. Consequently they now also resist the Bolshevik infiltration of the country and insist on Austria's neutrality in the contest between East and West.

But the Russians are apparently not contented with a Government in Austria which is merely neutral in this contest. They wish to see Austria ruled by a Government friendly, and indeed "loyal" to the Soviet Union. And they regard no Government as trustworthy unless it is directly or indirectly controlled by the Communists. But the Austrian Communist Party is very weak, and so long as the rules of democracy remain in force it is extremely unlikely that it could ever attain a dominating influence in the country. On the other hand, it can hardly be expected that the Socialists, who represent the overwhelming majority of the working class, should submit to the Communists, who represent only a tiny fraction of it. But that is precisely what the Russians have expected, and as they have been disappointed, they try to enforce submission by the utmost economic and political pressure.

But even should the Russians at long last be prepared to lift the siege of Austrian social democracy, and to withdraw their troops from the country, and to consent to the recognition of

Austria's sovereignty, the position of Austria, wedged in the States within the sphere of Russian influence, would remain one of the utmost precariousness, for she would be ground between the millstones of the colossuses of the East and the West.

Austria is geographically in a tragic position. But it is not necessarily a hopeless position. And if the Austrians are in earnest in their resolve to make their country a commonwealth of free people, the struggle to overcome their plight may well harden them and create for the first time in their history a spirit of self-sacrificing devotion to their country.

## EPILOGUE

### OBSERVATIONS ON THE SITUATION IN OCCUPIED AUSTRIA

By FRIEDRICH ADLER

JULIUS BRAUNTHAL's new book, *The Tragedy of Austria*, is the product of the same conviction, and comes to the same conclusions, as those held by myself. The presentation is factual and substantiated, and discusses the problems concerned in a very clear manner. I am therefore very glad that Julius Braunthal is letting the following observations appear together with his book. The English reader will thereby find the requisite elaboration and substantiation of certain facts to which my essay alludes only in passing.

A number of mimeographed copies of this essay in its German original version has been distributed among interested persons in August 1946 and a French version of it has been published in the Paris monthly *Revue Socialiste*, of November 1946. The French publication was the object of attacks by the Russian and Austrian Communist press and of an extensive leading article in the official newspaper of the Austrian Government, *Wiener Zeitung* (January 19, 1947), written by the Federal President of the Austrian Republic, Dr. Renner.

Re-reading my essay after two years I feel it unnecessary to change anything in it or to comment upon the critics. I also prefer to let it be a picture of the situation in 1946 rather than to go now into the details of the development since that time.

F. A.

#### I. "Freedom in Austria"

The convinced Socialist is faced with a dual task: concern for the *material* standards of the working class, and concern for its *moral* standards. Both these anxieties are extremely oppressive, and their worst aspect is their interdependence. Socialists often

find themselves between Scylla and Charybdis, on the horns of the dilemma, that if one seeks to avoid one danger one is apt to fall a prey to the other. The vexing question is: To what extent should and must material advantages be sacrificed to the maintenance of moral standards, and to what extent may one detract from the latter in order to safeguard the former?

I was never prepared to look only upon the obverse. In the bitter conflicts within the working class during the first world war I have always tried to appreciate the view that those who sacrificed the moral standards of international Socialism, thereby hoping to safeguard the material interests of the working class, should not, as a matter of course, be stigmatised as "traitors". And to-day, when all the consequences of Nazi madness manifest themselves in the most odious forms, I am further removed than ever from wishing to blame those who believe it is their duty to serve, in the first place, the material interests of the people of Austria. I am, however, convinced that it is my personal duty to continue the function delegated to me as a result of the consequences of the first world war—namely, to serve in maintaining and raising the moral standards of international socialism, or, at any rate—as I am fully cognisant to what narrow limits the objective, and even more my subjective capacities have been reduced—to avoid anything that might be conducive to obscuring this task.

In 1915 I had to begin the "Manifesto from the Internationals in Austria to the Internationals of all Countries" (*Die Internationalen in Oesterreich an die Internationalen Aller Länder*) with the statement: "The voice of Truth is stifled in Austria!" To-day, just as at that time, under the infamous Hapsburg absolutism, the truth about Austria can only be printed abroad. And for the benefit of those of our contemporaries who suffer from a police mentality it must again be emphasised that the Socialist Party of Austria is in no way committed to any responsibility for what I have to say. These allusions will no doubt suffice to make it clear why I must unfortunately wish to express my opinions, being quite *independent of "free Austria"*.

The conflict between opportunism and loyalty to principles has again reached a peak for the Austrian Socialists. Material privation has assumed dimensions never before experienced. The problem of surviving hunger in spite of "starvation

rations", of making dwellings out of ruins, of renewing tattered clothing, overshadows all others. The "plain fact, that people must before all else have food, drink, shelter and clothes, before they can engage in politics, science, art, religion and so forth",<sup>1</sup> has never been more palpably evident than in the present post-war period.

Moral privation is no less acute. The imminent danger of death, to which millions were exposed, defenceless and helpless, has undermined the nerves of even the bravest. The resistance movements against Nazi barbarity, with their records of glorious achievements, have, by virtue of feigning, deception, cunning and sabotage, "loosened all bands of pious awe". The demobilised soldiers, many of whom directly experienced the horrors of war, have gradually to win back their sense of right and wrong as citizens. All factors combined to produce a mighty wave of corruption following immediately on the armistice, particularly in those countries which had been liberated from Nazi oppression.

In those countries which were occupied by the Allies material and moral privation has, of necessity, given rise to a great show of servility towards the occupying Powers. This servile attitude is encouraged by the differences between the four occupying Powers. For the opportunity arises of playing upon those differences, in order to lighten the burden of the population, which has been reduced to misery and political impotence. The culminating point of this sort of situation was reached in Austria, already a small country, which was divided into four zones, each occupied by a different Power.

A part of the Austrian working class and its leaders are no doubt inwardly sensitive of the ignominy they have to endure in being without rights, after having already suffered the barbaric excesses of Nazi dictatorship. The speeches of Karl Seitz and Adolf Schärp in Parliament are the first voices of protest against the empty show of parliamentarism, against a State apparatus which is apparently based on the mechanism of Democracy, but which is, however, in practice only a façade, as the vital and final decisions are not left to the Austrian people, but to the greater or lesser understanding, and sometimes even to the sheer caprice, of foreign military authorities. However welcome any signs of protest against this state of affairs may be, no one will seek to deny that their scope, intensity and response among the masses can only be on

<sup>1</sup> Friedrich Engels in his funeral oration at Marx's grave.

a restricted scale under the present conditions of the occupation and material want.

Civil liberties have again been reduced to a cipher in "free Austria"—particularly the freedom of the Press. The shameful and ridiculous incident of the suppression of the Socialist *Linzer Tagblatt* in February 1946, on account of the publication of an article emphasising the common cultural heritage of the Austrian and German peoples, provides a striking example of the violation of this freedom. The honour of having taken the initiative in this attack on the freedom of the Press falls to the intellectual leader of the Austrian Communist Party, Ernst Fischer. But as the *Linzer Tagblatt* does not appear in the Russian zone—that is to say, in the zone where his wishes are law—this "action" could only be brought to a successful conclusion by the co-operation of U.S. military authorities in Linz. This co-operation was forthcoming, in that the American authorities banned the paper, and allowed it to reappear only after the chief editor, Dr. Oberhummer, who had already edited the paper prior to the Dollfuss and Hitler dictatorships, had been removed. And the finishing touches to this picture are added by the fact that the Viennese *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, which was once edited by the pioneer of the freedom of the Press in Austria, Friedrich Austerlitz, could not even venture an allusion to the concept of the freedom of the Press.<sup>1</sup>

Whoever has not read the article in the *Linzer Tagblatt* him-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. James H. Minifie, a psychological warfare officer of the American Army who served in Linz at this time, records about this incident as follows:

"For example, Russian top brass got incandescent about a piece written by the editor of the Socialist *Linzer Tagblatt*. The Communist organ in Vienna, *Oesterreichische Zeitung*, loosed all its guns. The Socialist papers in Vienna and Graz took up the cry. Dr. Oberhummer had said that Austrians and Germans were one race. It's perfectly true. They are. But the cry of 'Pan-Germanism' and 'racialism' was raised by the Communists (themselves slaves of Pan-Slavism) as an excuse to bring the terms of the Freedom of the Press declaration of October 1, 1935, into force against the Socialists whom they attack now as they did in the past, on every opportunity. The Socialists, as in the past, hadn't the sense to stick together. Our people went to see the editor, an old man whose journalistic vocabulary dated back a quarter of a century. He had obviously not intended to convey the impression which had acquired a special meaning in recent times as a result of Nazi distortion. However, he got no support from his party in Vienna and Graz, so there was nothing much we could do for him. We suspended the paper until the storm died down, a matter of a week or so."—*The Saturday Review of Literature*, New York, October 19, 1946, pp. 38 ff.



self (and the great majority of Austrians, quite apart from people abroad, were not in a position to do so), would be led to assume, from the expressions of alarm that followed its publication, that its suppression was a part of the process of denazification. But even the severest critic can find no trace of sympathy for the Nazis in the article. On the contrary, it begins with the statement (withheld by the Communist Press):—

“We are ashamed of the Nazi atrocities, which will for ever be a blot of shame on the German name. The names of Belsen, Ausschwitz, Buchenwald, Dachau and Mauthausen will be a stain on the German people in the eyes of the civilised world for centuries to come.”

And the last paragraph of the article begins with the statement (also withheld by the Communist Press):—

“No one in Austria has any desire to be a compulsory Prussian, no one in Austria has any more enthusiasm for the *Anschluss*, which brought such misfortune to us and to the world—for that was how it began. . . .”

Everyone will be prepared to admit that these are statements that by no means call for an act of denazification. The real core of the matter is quite otherwise. Certain ethnical “theories” of Ernst Fischer are to be foisted on the Austrian working class. Whereas individual Socialist publicists in Austria are already of the opinion that they will have to accommodate themselves to these theories, the article “*Gute Oesterreicher—Gute Kultur-Deutsche*” (“Good Austrians are Good Germans by Culture”) in the *Linzer Tagblatt* committed the crime of disapproving “that the working class should join the sorry throng of those ever ready opportunists (*Konjunkturritter*)” who now wish “only to be Austrians”, and who “do not want to hear anything about their being German”.

I am in full sympathy with this basis thesis of the article, to which the attention of far wider circles than the author could anticipate has been drawn, even though I would in many instances have formulated the argument differently.

However much one may disagree with particular passages in the article, the fact that the paper was suppressed because of it is a classical example of the low level to which politics have sunk in Austria. Because it deviated from the Communist view of the question as to whether the Austrians belonged to the German cultural community or whether they comprised

an "independent nation", an outcry was set up against the *Linzer Tagblatt* and an example made of it.

That this is really the case can be gathered from the subsequent activity of Ernst Fischer. For after his present views regarding the freedom of the Press had already triumphed, he still considered it necessary to come back to the *Linzer Tagblatt* article, which he had denounced, and to give this denunciation, with which he had started the campaign in the Viennese daily paper *Das neue Oesterreich*, a "theoretical" basis. To this purpose he dedicated a fourteen-page article in the March edition of the Viennese Communist monthly *Weg und Ziel*. The ill-considered and even absurd opinions which he puts forward in his article "*Der Grossdeutsche Gedanke und die Oesterreichische Arbeiterschaft*" ("The Pan-Germanic Concept and the Austrian Working Class")—it is not possible to determine where astounding ignorance of history ends and deliberate falsification begins<sup>1</sup>—would be thoroughly pilloried if the possibility

<sup>1</sup> In order to show that these remarks are not too severe, it is only necessary to refer to the statements made by Ernest Fischer in his article, with reference to the history of Czech "separatism" in the Trade Union movement of the old Austria. He condemns the "thoroughly distorted exposition" given by Otto Bauer, who attempted to explain separatism within the framework of the great independence movement of the Czech people, and traces all evil to the "German national poison", which, it is alleged, had seeped into the Austrian trade unions. It is not necessary to refer back to the very detailed historical exposition of this conflict in the report to the 7th Congress of the Austrian Trades Unions in 1913. A single glance through the protocol of the International Socialist Congress in Copenhagen in 1910 will suffice to bring down the whole house of cards of Ernst Fischer's grotesquely superficial assertions. Ernst Fischer does not even mention this Congress, at which, after an exhaustive debate, "every attempt to split internationally unified Trade Unions into national separatist sections" was condemned. He therefore does not need to inform his readers that the fable of an anti-Slavonic attitude on the part of the German-Austrian Social Democrats is demolished by the fact that the resolution accepted by the Copenhagen Congress was proposed by a Slav—the Russian Plekhanov—and the protocol on the results of the voting reads:

"Voting on the Commission's proposal will be by nations. All nations voted for the proposal, with 222 votes, among them also the two votes of the Czech minority. The Czech majority, with five votes, voted against the proposal."

Among the overwhelming majority, all Slavonic nations were represented, not least the Russian delegation of thirty-nine, among whom Lenin was one of the Bolshevik representatives! Ernst Fischer, however, would like us to believe that the great organisational problems with which the Austrian Trade Union movement, and finally the entire International, was occupied for one and a half decades was only a matter of "slogans of internationalism", behind which "the German orientation of Austrian Social Democracy hid itself".

of discussing the problems of the national question in "free Austria" were not restricted to those who are prepared to reconcile themselves with the "theories" of Ernst Fischer, adapted for Austrian use (in Germany, the Communists think fit to put forward quite different theories). As it is not even possible to issue a protest in Austria for the safeguarding of working class honour, let it at least be recorded abroad.

The prospect of avoiding part of the misery that now falls to the lot of the Germans is held before the eyes of the Austrians, if they are prepared to renounce all community with the Germans, and to insist that they are not Germans at all, but a nation alien to the Germans, that is to say—Austrians.

It is a simple matter for the Clericals, Monarchists and Communists to concede these demands of the peace strategy of the Allies. They can point out that the emigrés belonging to these groups maintained ever more firmly, throughout the war, that the Austrians should, even in the linguistic and cultural sphere, deny that they are Germans. An outstanding example of the ludicrous extent to which this policy was pursued is apparent in the petty Monarchist sheet, published in New York, which maintains on the front page of every number that it is written "in the Austrian language". The successors of the Clerico-Fascist regime can be pleased with the triumphs which the spirit of the "Fatherland Front" celebrates in the New Austria.

For the Austrian Socialists the problem is far more complicated. Their past should make it difficult to brush aside the complexities of the nationality question. Their aptitude in the field of political theory has contributed much to the elucidation of these problems. One need only recall the names of Karl Kautsky, Karl Renner and Otto Bauer to show how great was the contribution of the Austrians to scientific Marxism. And for that reason one is filled with shame when one contemplates the low level of argumentation resorted to by the epigones in order to establish their claim that Austrians are "not Germans". But this decadence has historical causes which it is not difficult to determine. Victor Adler once said half-jokingly on the subject of ethnical problems in his report on the Agenda of the International Socialist Congress convened for 1904, at the full Austrian Party Congress of 1903, "There was some hesitation about placing an item on the

agenda of which only we (the Austrians) are able to judge with wisdom; some Socialists from other countries don't know what it is all about. . . ." It is astounding how swiftly this "wisdom" earned at the price of the bitterest experience by the Austrians, has been lost after the disappearance of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, how far the generation which came to political maturity only during the first world war or after it, is removed from a knowledge of these ethnical problems.

The opportunists in the ranks of the Socialists are prepared to concur to a large extent with the renunciation of any common bonds, whatever their nature, with the Germans, even to be converted to "the curious thesis", as Otto Bauer called it, "that the Austrians were not Germans but a separate nation."<sup>1</sup> I cannot condone this abandonment of the moral and intellectual standards of the Austrian working class movement, without at least making an attempt to clarify the kernel of the issue as I understand it.

## *II. The Contradictions After the Annexation of Austria*

The basis of the relations between Austria and Germany has changed three times in one generation as the result of events of universal significance:

- 1918 By the decision of the victorious Great Powers to sanction the liquidation of the old Austro-Hungarian Monarchy.

<sup>1</sup> *Translator's Note.* This sentence of Otto Bauer's reveals most impressively the great difficulty with which the translator of documents concerning the Austrian problem is confronted. In English the words "nation" and "state" are very often given the same meaning. In some European countries, however, the meanings of the two words are quite different. For instance, under the rule of the Hapsburgs several "nations" (Czechs, Germans, Poles, and so on) lived together in one "state". The eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* draws attention to this difference in an article "Nationality", where it states: "Nationality used . . . in a more extended sense in political discussion, to denote an aggregation of persons claiming to represent a racial, territorial or some other bond of unity, though not necessarily recognized as an independent political entity. In this latter sense the word had often been applied to such people as the Irish, the Armenians and the Czechs". In the meantime the Irish and Czech nations have achieved the creation of their own independent states; so they can no longer be used as examples for the illustration of this difference. But the problem still exists for other "nations".

In the Austrian Marxist school there was much discussion of the problem of what, besides a common language, are the characteristics of a "nation". But there was always complete agreement that a community without a common language could not be considered as a "nation" and that therefore the Austrian Monarchy was not a "nation".

- 1938 By the decision of the Great Powers to tolerate Hitler's annexation of the German-speaking areas of Europe, and thereby the creation of a Greater Germany.
- 1943 By the decision of the victorious Great Powers to set up the disintegration of Germany as one of the war aims. This intention became step by step more apparent through the declarations of the Moscow, Teheran, Yalta and Potsdam Conferences.

Immediately after the publication of the Moscow declaration on the subject of Austria, I set forth in detail, in an article published at the time,<sup>1</sup> the manner in which Austrian Social Democracy reacted to the factor of the liquidation of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, and what changes its attitude to the *Anschluss* underwent in the time of independent Austria.

We will find speediest clarification of the conflict of opinions, which arose after the annexation of Austria by Hitler, if we turn to the last article which Otto Bauer published before his death, on the Austrian question; he wrote: <sup>2</sup>

"When the German troops subjected Austria to the Third Reich, the working-class parties in Austria were faced with the questions: Should Austrian Socialism continue the struggle against the subjection of Austria to the Third Reich, and for Austrian independence, which it had carried on since 1933? Can and should its aims be the separation of Austria from the Third Reich, and the re-establishment of an independent Austria? Or can the liberation of the Austrian people from National-Fascist dictatorship only be achieved, not by the re-establishment of Austrian independence, not by the separation of Austria from Germany, but by the liberation of the entire German people from its National-Fascist oppressors?

"The two proletarian parties of Austria came to diametrically opposed decisions on this question.

"The Communists had already prepared the ground for their decision before the annexation, by their curious thesis that the Austrians were not Germans at all, but a separate nation. After the annexation they had adopted Schuschnigg's

<sup>1</sup> *Die Legende vom Glücklichen Oesterreich in Austrian Labor Information* No. 20. New York, November, 1943.

<sup>2</sup> *Nach der Annexion in Der Sozialistische Kampf*, Paris, June, 1938, reprinted in *Austrian Labor Information* No. 15, pp. 4-7. New York, June 1943.

slogan, "Red-White-Red <sup>1</sup> till I'm dead", and did not hesitate to proclaim the re-establishment of Austrian independence as one of their aims, together with Legitimist supporters of the Fatherland Front and Clericals.

"The Socialists, on the other hand, determined at a Conference held in Brussels at the beginning of April, 1938, that the Austrian people could not be liberated by separation from Germany, but only by an all-German revolution against German Fascism. Against the Irredentist-Separatist solution of the defeated Fatherland Front, they put forward the solution of an all-German revolution."

The Socialists had accepted "the fact" of accomplished annexation, recognised by the Great Powers, as a working basis of their policy. They attempted to create the most favourable pre-conditions for the removal of the Hitler regime by revolutionary means. Whoever glances through the 1938 issues of *Der Sozialistische Kampf*, published in Paris, will realise that the concept of an all-German revolution was not a chance thought of Otto Bauer, that it was not a Conference decision taken in the excitement of the first moment after the annexation, but that the problem of the organisational integration of all anti-Nazi forces of the new Greater Germany was the distinctive basis of Austrian Socialist policy in that period. Individual comrades, who were directly influenced by the experiences of the last days of the Schuschnigg regime, might even then have been inclined towards the Communist solution of again breaking away from Germany, but objective historical evidence testifies that the great majority of Socialists from Austria based their hopes, in so far as practical politics were concerned (quite apart from all ideological considerations), on the actual situation and on the defeat of Hitler by the all-German revolution. The present writer confesses that he belonged whole-heartedly to this majority.

Hitler was not defeated by revolution, but by the world war, which he had provoked. The consequence of his defeat was not, as we had hoped, the *liberation of Germany*, but the *destruction of Germany* by the victorious Allies. Hitler's responsibility for the catastrophe into which Germany is plunging is beyond question. Not only is the Greater Germany, which was tolerated by the Great Powers in 1938, dissolved at Hitler's defeat, but, in addition, vital regions are to be separated from

<sup>1</sup> Red-white-red are the colours of the Austrian flag.—F. A.

the territory of Germany, as it was circumscribed by the Versailles Treaty. Germany is faced with decades of military occupation, with the deterioration, if not destruction, of its economic foundations. Among these decisions of universal historical significance the proclamation of Austrian independence was indeed the first step, but still only a subordinate measure. But in order to understand the fate of Austria one must view it within the framework of this general decision.

The existence of Greater Germany, brought about under Hitler against the proclaimed will of the Austrian Socialists, was the historical fact which this policy had to take into account after the annexation. The disintegration, not only of Greater Germany, but also of pre-Hitler Germany, is the new fact to which the Austrian Socialists have to accommodate themselves. I would like to illustrate the magnitude of this reorientation by one sentence, which I wrote in the introduction to Otto Bauer's last book, *The Illegal Party (Die illegale Partei)*, at the end of 1938:

"In the four decades during which Otto Bauer constantly served the cause of Socialism, the problem which lay nearest to his heart, the Austrian question, assumed ever new forms. We have lost him at a time at which, as he immediately realised with full clarity, there was no longer an Austrian question, and that there should not be one, as this question was absorbed in the far wider one of the all-German revolution."

Our point of view, that there "was no longer an Austrian question and that there should not be one", has been proved wrong by historical events: *there is once again an Austrian question.*

We will openly admit that events have pursued a course quite different from the one we had hoped for in 1938. The all-German revolution did not materialise. Instead, the other alternative took place: "the war-minded imperialism of the Third Reich plunged the German people into a new war", the fatal consequences of which Otto Bauer depicted in the article referred to above. Our policy, which was based on the all-German revolution, was wrecked. But there is no reason why we should deny that this was in fact our policy, that we wished to spare the world the unspeakable catastrophe of a second world war by "liberating", as Otto Bauer put it, "the Austrian branch of the nation together with the other German branches from the yoke of the Fascist oppressors".

The Austrian Communists greeted the decision of the Moscow conference with rejoicing, and they had every reason to rejoice. For the first time in twenty-five years they had the satisfaction that a slogan which they had issued corresponded to the path which History took. Their demand for the re-establishment of an independent Austria by separation from the German Reich could be realised only by war, and was in fact realised by war. We will willingly concede their satisfaction in that their point of view in 1938, which did not reckon with an all-German revolution, proved more correct than ours. But this does not mean that we can accept the theories on which they based their propaganda during those years.

### *III. Degeneration into Particularism as an Aim of the Austrians*

The question "Are we Austrian?" or "Are we German?" is a typically scholastical one, if it supposes a *general* antithesis without stating *in which relation* it is to be considered. For whoever is called upon to think dialectically, even in a small way, will, in the first instance, argue from the thesis: of course we are *both* Austrian *and* German. And this is where our problems only begin. For now we have to investigate: *What are the relations* between the two societies to which we belong? What respective places do they occupy in our thoughts and feelings? In what way do they coincide, and in what way run counter to each other? To what metamorphoses are these relationships subjected by changes in the historical situation? What changes do the conceptions of "Austrian" and "German" as such undergo in history?

We do not wish to discuss whether the Austrians are a separate *nation*, as Ernst Fischer asserts, or whether they are to be considered as one of the *branches* of the German nation—a thesis which was accepted by Otto Bauer, and, as far as I am aware, by all other reputable scholars, as a matter of course. All scientific convention, and the entire history of the Austrian Empire, which was a multi-national state, contradict the thesis that the German-Austrians can be considered to have constituted, or constitute, a separate "nation". Let us not wrangle over nomenclature, but rather lay bare the core of the dispute. And that core does not lie in more or less apt definitions, but in the actual *trend of development*, apparent in the State created by the Treaty of St. Germain, which is again being reconstructed.



The attempt to prove that the "Austrian Nation" is an actual historically substantiated community is, in our opinion, a ludicrous enterprise. But the question arises: Can that which did not exist in the past, exist in the *future*? Should the Austrians not only constitute a separate State, but also be encouraged to produce national characteristics of their own? Should they be differentiated in their culture and language, by which they are part of the German nation, so that they are able eventually to vaunt all the characteristics of a separate nation?

Such a possibility, taking a very long-term view, is by no means to be excluded. But what would this lopping off from the German nation actually signify? It would in our opinion signify a *degeneration into Particularism*—although others do not hesitate to proclaim such *Particularism as an ideal*, even as an international ideal. But however one views such a development, the Austrians must come to terms with the *problem of Particularism*, with which they are confronted by the present configuration of power in the world.

As far as I am aware, there is no extensive scientific work which concerns itself with Particularism as its main subject of research. Nor is it within the scope of this essay to enter into the major and historical aspects of this problem. It is only intended to clarify the point that the real problem of present-day Austria is to be found in *Particularism*, and that entirely *different aspects of the problem* are involved than heretofore.

The trend towards the formation of Nation-States, which makes its appearance at a time when capitalism is gaining predominance over feudalism, takes the form among the great nations, as in the first instance with the French and Italians, of a struggle against Particularism. Marx and Engels always considered the liquidation of Particularism as a historical step forward. Particularism is referred to in Marxist literature only in derogatory, and often in contemptuous terms.

The unity of the nation can be confronted by both external and internal enemies. The external enemies are the political, strategic or property interests of foreign nations or potentates. The internal enemy is the desire and determination of certain sections of the nation to segregate themselves in this or that respect from the nation as a whole. These latter strivings are classed as "Particularism".

Particularism can be total, in complete separation from the other sections of the nation, or only limited, in the reservation of certain rights. This distinction can best be examined in the

example of Bavaria, in so far as State and legal relations are concerned. The known examples of Particularist trends relate to the spheres of State, law and economy. The problem assumes a very much more complex nature when Particularism is further invoked in the sphere of culture, and eventually even in that of language. And it is precisely in connection with these last two spheres that the decisive *new* problem arises for the Austrians, which they have never had to meet previously, and before which they are now placed for the first time.

For hitherto discussion was confined to the question as to which *State* the Austrian branch of the German nation should belong. Should it remain a constituent part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire? Should it be incorporated in the German Reich? Or should it form a separate State?

The German Austrians experienced all three forms of State organisation within less than three decades. But neither under the Hapsburgs nor in the days of the first Republic was there ever any attempt to deny that the Austrians belonged, culturally and linguistically, to the German nation. Particularism was in those periods strictly confined to State organisation. Different sections of the German nation were allotted to different States, and there was no question of Particularism on the part of the German Austrians, nor could there be any question thereof, as the essence of Particularism, the desire and striving to be separated from the nation, did not exist.

The most illuminating subject for the entire problem is the attitude of the nations in the last few decades, and in particular at the time of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. It was, above all, Karl Renner, in the truly masterly productions of his youth before the first world war, who sought a solution of the problems of the destiny of the nations, in order to organise a supernational State on a democratic basis that would create equal rights and opportunities of development for all nations. The programme relating to individual nations of the empire, accepted by the All-Party Congress of the Social Democrats in Brno in 1899, was a considered first attempt to point the way to such potentialities on a practical basis. It arose from the desire to secure full linguistic and cultural autonomy to the nations and branches of nations within the economic framework of the great State, which Austria-Hungary was at the time (deliberately accepting the splitting up of the nations among separate States), thereby enabling them to live together politically and economically.

This phase of Social Democratic policy therefore represents an attempt to reconcile oneself with renunciation of the nation-State. It therefore has an undoubtedly Particularist tone. But, as it attempts to organise the great State democratically on an international basis, it is the very opposite to the tendency to form small States, and, with regard to language and culture, absolutely *anti-Particularist*.

This attempt failed. The striving for national unity and national independence on the part of the nations, which was one of the deepest roots from which the first world war sprang, proved overpowering. The only two nations of the Austro-Hungarian Empire which lived entirely within the imperial frontiers, the Czechs and the Magyars, wanted to be free from the rule of "Vienna". They wanted independent self-government. They preferred the small State, in which they would form the majority, to the large State, in which, like any other nation, they would be only a minority. In the case of the Poles, Italians, Yugoslavs, Ukrainians and Rumanians, the determination to achieve national unity within the nation-State was paramount. The centrifugal forces triumphed. Thus the solution to seek salvation in the nationally unified State, through the *Anschluss*, was almost automatically forced on the German Austrians, amongst whom centrifugal tendencies had the weakest force. There is no trace of Particularism in the history of the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. On the contrary, strong *anti-Particularist trends* are apparent.

Big States and nation-States offer advantages which can be simultaneously enjoyed only by great nations. Small nations are compelled to renounce one or the other of these advantages. In view of its numerical strength, the German nation, just as the French and Italian, was able to enjoy both advantages at the same time, to form a nation-State which was also a big State. In the disintegration of Austria the forces amongst the smaller nations aiming towards the nation-State proved far stronger than those aiming towards a heterogeneous big State. Only the Germans and Italians in Austria enjoyed the prospect of being able to combine both advantages—not only to form part of a nation-State, but also thereby to form part of a big State. For the German Austrians the hopes that Vienna, which had evolved as the centre of a great empire, might avoid the economic disintegration which threatened it, if it was in a position to exploit its potentialities as a commercial and in-

dustrial centre by reincorporation in a big State, were an important factor in strengthening the desire for the *Anschluss*. But the victorious Powers, led by France, decided otherwise. The new Austria was not to be part of a nation-State, and therefore not part of a big State.

The middle-class parties were at first as much opposed to an "independent" Austria as the Social Democrats. But in time diverse opinions came to light as to how isolation was to be overcome. A section of the middle class began to advocate the "Danube Federation", behind which the silent hopes of the Monarchists for a restoration of the Hapsburgs screened themselves. When the inflation in Germany reached its height, a section of the Christian Social Party openly took up the slogan against "*Anschluss* to the Mark". Other sections of the middle class and peasantry, above all those tinged with anti-Clericalism and German nationalism, firmly adhered to the solution of the *Anschluss* in all phases of the development of the question.

It was only with Hitler's seizure of power in Germany that the situation became radically different. A section of the German nationalist middle class went over, more or less openly, to the Nazi camp, whereas the Social Democrats firmly maintained their anti-Fascist standpoint. On May 13, 1933, the executive of the Social Democratic Party and the Parliamentary Social Democratic Party published a declaration of principle, which read: "We have worked for the *Anschluss* with the German Republic—we reject the *Anschluss* to a Fascist penal prison".

The independence of Austria as a State, which had hitherto rested on the decision of the victorious Powers of the first world war, was now energetically defended as the lesser evil by the Social Democrats against Hitler dictatorship. For the time being State Particularism had triumphed. But there could not be the remotest question of Particularism in the cultural sphere, for it was, on the contrary, precisely the German cultural community which provided the ideological foundation on which the struggle against Hitler tyranny rested.

After the annexation of Austria a whole group of opportunists soon joined those who asserted that "what they had always said", the *Anschluss* to Germany—that is to say, the unity of the nation—had at last been brought about. The merest suggestion of Particularism now invoked the threat of proceedings for high treason.

The opposite trend—*revulsion against Nazi atrocities*—could

not express itself openly within the domain of the Nazi Reich. This feeling undoubtedly gained ever more ground the longer Hitler's rulership lasted, even although the Nazi propaganda apparatus largely succeeded in keeping people in ignorance of the harshest bestialities and of the whole awful extent of the system. But after the Nazis had been defeated and the truth became ever more widely known, indignation could be openly expressed. The feeling of shame at having been in any way connected with the Nazi atrocities no doubt made many susceptible to views which asserted that hatred and contempt should be directed not only "against the Nazis", but "against the Germans" in general.

This attitude was no doubt one of the psychologically comprehensible sources of the quickening of Particularist trends among the Austrians, which in some cases assumed the proportion of a desire for *escape from the nation*. But the declaration that one is "not identical nor in any way related", with which one attempts to avoid being confused or associated with criminal namesakes in private life, is irrelevant in the case of actual relationship. In any case it cannot be accepted as evidence in the question of the relationship between Austrians and Germans. It is not only that Hitler, Seyss-Inquart and many other Austrians were amongst the worst criminals of the Nazi movement (it is therefore idle to assert that the "Austrian nation" is incapable of such crimes), but because the national relationships have far deeper historical roots. The reaction to the *megalomania* of a section of the German people, that they are a "master race", must not take the form of a psychosis of an opposite nature—a *pathological inferiority complex* of the German nation. There has been a Germany other than that of the Nazis, and there is no plausible reason for giving up the hope that a system of society will be possible in the future in which the Germans will neither be a *master race* nor a *slave race*.

The resistance movements against Hitler were, as I have shown before, split on a decisive issue. As they were illegal, it will never be possible to ascertain how they were split up with regard to their numerical strength and the extent of their influence inside Austria. Amongst Austrians who had emigrated abroad, however, these differences of opinion were openly expressed. When the Moscow declaration set up the re-establishment of a "free and independent Austria" as one of the war aims, and the victory of the Allies became ever more certain, the tendency to *extend Particularism to the cultural sphere*,

which originally made its appearance as no more than the puerile hobby-horse of individual propagandists, became increasingly the subject of "relevant" considerations by "opportunists" (*Konjunkturritter*) of every shade. After the Russian occupation of Eastern Austria, the Austrian Communists considered the time had come when their demand for the renunciation of any community of culture with the Germans—that is, the *recognition of total Particularism*—could be raised to the level of a programme, and be carried into practice.

This brief survey of the role which Particularism has played in Austria hitherto gives a clear indication where to look for the decisive problem at the present time.

There is no doubt that the overwhelming majority of Austrians to-day does not consider the possibility of an *Anschluss* to Germany, nor can such a possibility be contemplated in the devastated condition in which Germany will find herself for the next few decades: There is nothing attractive about *Anschluss* to a corpse. Austrian independence is an actual fact, on which Austrians have, for the present, to base their policy. We will never admit that State Particularism is an *ideal*. But we have now, as previously, to accept it as our *fate*.

With regard to State Particularism, there is only one point of dispute, which has nowadays no practical significance, but which those who are accustomed to unambiguous thinking must not overlook. For the "opportunists" now declare that Austria should "as a matter of principle" abjure the *Anschluss* for all time.

We are deeply mistrustful of the formula "for all time". We know it too well from peace treaties, which are always concluded "for all time", with the most varying context. And the Austrians in particular should have learnt from the experience of the last thirty years how dangerous it is to seek to commit the future. No one can tell what Europe will be like in another thirty years time. No one can to-day say whether a *Socialist Germany*—which is what we wanted—will not emerge after the period of the occupation. No one can or may assume *responsibility for future generations*. The Austrians may, perhaps, take up an attitude to a Socialist Germany of the future completely different from the one they adopt to-day, when Germany is devastated by the Hitler reign of terror, by war and by occupation.

But, as stated above, Austrian Particularism is, for the German Austrians, once again to-day, and no doubt for some

time to come, the basic factor in practical politics. One must retain that fact clearly in one's consciousness, in order to emphasise all the more sharply the question on which the actual conflict of ideas revolves to-day—the question of *Particularism with regard to the linguistic and cultural community*.

The intention of creating an "Austrian nation" is, in my opinion, entirely utopian. But if this reactionary, as well as nauseous, Utopia should ever be realised—should the Austrians, in fact, be faced with the choice between the "Austrian nation" and the "German nation" (which situation I shall fortunately not live to see), I would be one of those who would, without hesitation, elect to remain with the nation, for which, for example, Goethe's *Faust*, Wagner's *Ring of the Nibelungen*, Freiligrath's poems of the revolution and Lassalle's speeches do not belong to a *foreign* culture.

The Austrians are, however, far removed from having to take such decisions. To-day it is a matter of not allowing oneself to be intimidated and of realising that one can be a good Austrian as well as a good member of the German cultural community.

In the first world war the State attorney disputed my right to call myself a good Austrian because I acknowledged that I belonged to the international community, even in time of war.

Perhaps there are some to-day who would like to deny my right to call myself a good Austrian because I acknowledge my membership of the German cultural community.

In an oft-quoted and brilliant article on *The Essence of Internationalism*, in which Otto Bauer impressively comments on the major theses of the *Communist Manifesto*, he states as a primary characteristic of true internationalism the *subordination* on principle of all special aims of national democracy to the common interest of the World Labour movement. In view of the problem of Particularism, we have to add that just as there is an *order of precedence* among international and national interests, there is also an order of precedence among the interests of the nation as a whole and those of its parts. Local, regional and sectional interests must be *subordinated* to the common interests of the nation.

Based on this order of precedence, I am, and have always been, in the first place an internationalist, in the second place a German, and only in the third place an Austrian. After the first world war the Austrian workers justified my opinions, and not those of the State attorney. I am convinced that when

it is again possible to speak openly in Austria they will understand that my association with the Austrian Labour movement cannot in any way be prejudiced because I wish to continue to belong to that cultural community to which Marx and Engels, Bebel and Liebknecht, Victor Adler and Otto Bauer always belonged, and because I place the German cultural community above all sectional and Particularist interests.

#### IV. Particularism and Internationalism

In his above-mentioned article, Ernst Fischer repeatedly emphasises that "*every quickening of Austrian national consciousness is not only a primary Austrian interest, but also a primary international interest*". He advocates (on page 140) "*the genuinely Austrian and therefore genuinely international outlook*".

These rather surprising assertions, which would hardly appear to be derived from the ideas of Marx, are based on "strategic" considerations. Ernst Fischer is aware of a doubtlessly accurate fact: that "subjugated nations are dynamite in any imperialist regime" (page 141). His "theory" evidently received its first impulse in that, as the "Austrian nation" did not exist, it would have to be invented, in order to be used as a revolutionary explosive force. But a longer period of time is required to create a nation than to convert certain industries to the manufacture of explosives. As it requires at least several generations to bring about the emergence of a nation, as desired by Ernst Fischer, his prescription could not possibly lead to any results in time to be effective during the war. He should therefore realise now that his strategic considerations were somewhat inappropriate, in that the Austrians never were, and never could be, an oppressed nation under Hitler. With regard to language and other national rights, they were in exactly the same position as all other branches of the German people which suffered under Hitler's rule. The struggle against Hitler could therefore have been carried on by the Austrians only in the same manner as all other German opposition, that is, not as a national, but as a *political*, anti-fascist struggle.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, in other parts of his article Ernst Fischer abandons the theory "subjugated nations are dynamite", in a most unexpected and curious manner. For, whereas he stigmatises the line of the Austrian Socialists in 1939, advocating an *all-German revolution*, as "nebulous", an "irrational flight of fancy" and as an "idea contemptuous of the Labour movement and of freedom-loving peoples" (page 140), he blames Otto



The Austrians under Hitler's rule were not a "subjugated nation". The strategic possibilities were therefore limited to the *State Particularism* of the Austrians. It certainly cannot be denied that it is theoretically conceivable that even Particularism could become a revolutionary factory. An attempt in this direction, although unsuccessful, has in fact been made. In 1919 Kurt Eisner was deluded into thinking that Bavarian Particularism could be used as fuel for the revolution. He did not live to see how rapidly this "revolutionary factor" resumed its normal function—that of a counter-revolutionary factor. But as far as the "strategy" of the second world war is concerned, there can be no doubt that the accusation that Hitler suppressed Particularism is the weakest argument against him; it hardly played a significant role in rousing opposition against his rule.

The isolation of Austria was put into effect by the Allies. Ernst Fischer's "theory" therefore requires a further argument for the future. The essence of his "theory" is that it is the duty of the Austrians, not only to live in an isolated "independent" State, but to become an "Austrian nation", in order to prevent any re-emergence of German imperialism. He thus advocates *the ideal of Particularism as a safeguard against the menace of German imperialism*.

Reading Ernst Fischer's arguments, one might be struck by the thought that there is only *one* imperialism—German imperialism—that this imperialism is an *eternal* factor, and that we must surrender any hope of removing this imperialist menace by setting up a genuinely Socialist Germany. This curious point of view of Ernst Fischer's calls for two questions.

Firstly: Does he seriously believe that there is only *one* imperialism—German imperialism—and that the imperialism of the great capitalist Powers no longer presents any danger? Or does Ernst Fischer believe that Particularism should also

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Bauer for failing to work for an *all-Austrian revolution* in 1918! Otto Bauer "undermined the great historical potentiality of a *common revolution of all peoples* of the empire under the leadership of the working class" (page 136). It is therefore not the dynamite of the subjugated nations of the Hapsburg Empire, which bears the blame for "passing by the great opportunity of a *common revolution*, of a *common struggle* for liberation, as a basis for a free federation of the Danube peoples", but Otto Bauer's *Nationalitätenprogramm der Linken* (the Programme of the Left relating to the nationality question), which correctly diagnosed this process of disintegration in 1918. Ernst Fischer will evidently rely only on synthetic explosives, and ignores that which, in fact, shattered the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

be recommended to, say, the French and the Americans, as "a cure for imperialism? Does he seriously believe that the French and American Communists can adopt his slogan for use in their own countries?

Secondly: Why should just the Austrians defend total Particularism as an *international* ideal? Why not the Bavarians and all the other branches of the German race? The answer to this question demonstrates that the consequences of the theory, which recommends Particularism as a cure for imperialism, extend far beyond little Austria.

Otto Bauer fully clarified these thoughts in his already quoted article *Nach der Annexion* ("After the Annexation"). He wrote:

"If the military imperialism of the Third Reich plunges the German people into a new war and if Germany is defeated in this war by capitalist, imperialist Powers, these Powers will seek to disrupt and split up the German Reich. They have had the experience that all the fetters they foisted on to the German Reich in the Treaty of Versailles, in order to prevent the revival of its strength, have been broken after a few years. If they again defeat Germany on the battlefield, they will try to shatter the German Reich, in order more effectively to prevent it from again becoming strong. They will try to make use of the Catholic-Separatist-Legitimist Vendée of the German revolution, in order to separate a new Rhine League from the Reich, in order to revive the old romantic German federalism, in order to reconstitute the German Reich as a loose German Federation."

Otto Bauer's hope of a revolution in Germany was not realised. The "Clerical, Particularist, Separatist, Legitimist forces in the Catholic area of the Reich" were therefore not in the position to function as the "Vendée of the German revolution". They have nevertheless remained a serious *counter-revolutionary* menace. According to Ernst Fischer, we should conclude that the Bavarians<sup>1</sup> and the other branches

<sup>1</sup> After this article had been concluded, a United Press report from Stuttgart of July 5, 1946, states:

"At the session of the inter-regional council of the Western German provinces, the Bavarian prime minister Högnér stated that only the creation of a federation of German states could provide the *guarantee against a new Hitler*. He would in point of fact prefer the *separation of*

of the German race also should feel their *international responsibility* and support Particularism!

Or is this perhaps not quite the case? Moscow strategy with regard to the German problem has oscillated between the two extremes of the declaration of liberation and the declaration of destruction. It now appears to be returning to the phase of defending the *unified German State*. This strategic change of direction may perhaps relieve the Austrian Socialists of the task of discussing further Ernst Fischer's doctrine of *Particularism as an international ideal*.

I am still convinced that the question of the "Austrian nation" has been raised by the Communists quite thoughtlessly, without serious examination of the consequences, and that this question has no connection with the really urgent, practical problems of Austria, and still less with the incomparably more important questions of the future of Socialism and Internationalism. All the same, as one of the few Austrians who can discuss these questions freely, outside the range of the censorship of the occupying Powers, I have considered it my duty to contribute to the clarification of the problems of total Particularism, because there is the danger that the Communists will continue to misuse the influence they enjoy by virtue of the Russian occupation, in order to set up a Caudine yoke, by which adherence to the theory of the "Austrian nation" is to be enforced.

There are two types of internationalism. One is easy-going, the other hard, and often demanding sacrifices. The distinction between these two types is most in evidence when the world is divided by war fronts or post-war fronts. The easy-going type of "Internationalism" is content to limit expressions of solidarity to those who live behind the same war front. The hard type, which in my opinion is the only one that has a right to the honour of calling itself "Internationalism", maintains solidarity with international Socialists on the other side of the trenches even in war time. During the first world war I advocated this hard type of internationalism. I maintained

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*Bavaria from Germany*, but as that was not possible he supported Bevin's suggestion of creating a German Federation."

Because of his attitude to Particularism, the Social Democrats did not elect Hogner to the party executive at the Hanover conference. Will Ernst Fischer congratulate himself on having found a comrade in Hogner, with regard to his theory of Particularism as the cure against the threat of German imperialism?

solidarity with Serb, Russian, French and English Socialists. I defended the rights of occupied and violated Belgium. For exactly the same reason which prompted me at that time, I have, in the second world war, when I had the good fortune to live outside the realm of Nazi rule, always advocated not only the struggle against Hitler, but also solidarity with the German Socialists, who were suffering under Hitler's tyranny.

I have never been able to consider an organisation justified in calling itself international if it was not prepared to accept internationally minded Socialists on the other side of the war front on equal terms. The Austrian Socialists would be involved in a painful misconception if they justified their worthiness to take part in international gatherings by the fact that they were "not Germans". In my opinion they are more than anyone else bound to realise the obligation of solidarity by stressing that it was not Austria, but the *German working class*, that was Hitler's first victim. The reign of Hitler terror began in 1933 with the Reichstag fire and with the hunting of "Jewish Marxism". The first concentration-camp prisoners and the first of the murdered were Socialists and Communists in Germany. Genuinely international Socialists will always feel solidarity with the German working class, which offered a resistance to Hitler when the capitalist Governments of the great democracies still viewed his persecutions with comparative indifference.

Protestations of being an "Austrian nation", and of Particularism, may, for a certain length of time, bring Austrians some, if only modest, material gains. I would consider it unworthy of the tradition of Austrian Socialists, as fighters for Internationalism, to exploit such protestations in order to ease their position in international affairs. As against all such misconceptions, we will always maintain: The ideal for which we entered the struggle was not Austrian Particularism, but international Socialism. We will remain faithful to this ideal.

*Brussels,*  
*July 1946.*

APPENDIX

MUSSOLINI AND DOLLFUSS

AN EPISODE IN FASCIST DIPLOMACY

By PAUL R. SWEET

INTRODUCTORY OBSERVATIONS

I

THE DECADE before the outbreak of war in 1939, full as it was of individual acts of heroism and self-sacrifice, produced very few significant occasions when men, organised and armed, waged a clean-cut fight against Fascism. One of these occasions was the "uprising" which occurred in Austria in February 1934.

The fighting in Austria lasted only four days. It was scarcely more than a valiant gesture by men who knew their cause was doomed, but these four days stand out brightly in a generally dismal decade, and deserve to be remembered.

The partisans of Dollfuss, the Austrian Chancellor, insisted at the time, and still do, that he was the victim of circumstances, a "democratic" man, who wanted the democratic elements to accept his authoritarianism for their own good. He never would have dreamed of using armed force, let alone artillery, say his admirers, if radical leaders of the Left had not confronted him with a long-planned revolution.

According to the argument of the Dollfuss-men, the Social Democrats had pledged themselves to "violent revolution" at their Party Congress at Linz in 1926, and had never deviated from that aim.<sup>1</sup> Following this line, Schuschnigg, Dollfuss' political heir and successor as Chancellor, claimed that democracy was "only a matter of political expediency" to the Austrian Socialists, who differed among themselves only on the question as to the "time when force was to be used to overthrow the bourgeoisie". Finally, Schuschnigg said the

<sup>1</sup> G. E. R. Gedye, *Fallen Bastions, The Central European Tragedy* (London, 1939), p. 53.

"party ideology" of the Socialists, and their "uncontrolled determination to hold power in the State" caused them to "set off the alarm which brought on the revolt". Thus, Schuschnigg was able to conclude, the members of the Dollfuss Government bore "no responsibility for the unhappy events of February 1934".<sup>1</sup>

The Social Democrats doubtless do bear some measure of responsibility for the way the crisis had developed in Austria in the years prior to 1934. They were often guilty of obstructionism, and sometimes of political irresponsibility; and they accepted too readily the device of a State within a State—based on their political control of the city of Vienna and on their para-military formation, the Republican Defence Corps—without giving sufficient regard to the long-range implications of such a policy. Furthermore, their lack of faith in the new Austria was a drag on their capacity for constructive action. They were not, however, as their opponents loosely asserted,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Kurt Schuschnigg, *My Austria* (New York, 1938), pp. 97, 218. In a report dated November 28, 1935, and entitled *Ueberblick über die politische Situation in Oesterreich*, which Schuschnigg caused to be drawn up for the information of the Vatican, the events of February 1934 were explained as follows:

"The elimination of Socialism—whose co-operation was to be gained only by the abandonment of essential cultural and political claims, and whose continuance would have evoked sooner or later a latent civil war—was urgently necessary at the moment when, in February 1934, without any cause, the Socialists made an armed uprising."—State Archives, Vienna, *Liasse Oesterreich*, Fasz. 467.

<sup>2</sup> Critics of the Austrian Social Democrats often argue that, devoted as the Socialists may have been to democratic action, they still adhered to a Marxist lingo which confused their opponents. Some weight probably deserves to be given to this accusation, but when one reads what Socialists actually said in juxtaposition to what Schuschnigg, for example, said they said, it is hard to escape the conclusion that people like Schuschnigg were confused because they wanted to be confused. And why did such people want to be confused? For this reason: The real crime of the Socialists, in the eyes of the Clerical Party, was that they were committed to an anti-Clerical policy. Rather than risk defeat on the issue of Clericalism, elements within the Clerical Party were fully prepared to seize control of the State by force and to institute an authoritarian regime. But in order to justify this sort of counter-revolutionary action it was necessary, or at least highly desirable, to assume that the Socialists were committed to the pursuit of revolutionary ends by revolutionary means. In the above-cited memorandum of November 25, 1935, which Schuschnigg had prepared for the Vatican, the official line of the Clerical Party is stated with the absolutely straight face proper to the occasion and the audience: "There is no doubt whatsoever that the Socialists, like the Nazis, nourish the hope of obtaining control of the State by force. They dream of a dictatorship of the proletariat

a revolutionary party. In his famous speech at Linz in 1926, Otto Bauer, spokesman for the Socialist Left Wing, had strongly espoused the use of democratic methods in the pursuit of political power, and he had argued that the use of force would be justifiable only to meet counter-revolutionary action aimed at the destruction of the Social-Democratic political organisation.<sup>1</sup> This remained the official attitude of the Party, both in principle and in practice, right down to February 1934. Furthermore, documents in the Austrian archives prove beyond dispute that when the Austrian Socialists took up arms they did so to meet "counter-revolutionary action", which had long been planned, to destroy the remnants of their organisation.

The prime movers in this action were Mussolini and the leaders of the *Heimwehr*, an Austrian Fascist formation. Dollfuss made himself their instrument. He promised Mussolini on July 22, 1933, that he would eliminate the Socialists from Austrian political life "as soon as the situation permits it". The events of February 1934 derived directly from this agreement.<sup>2</sup>

## II

Dollfuss had become Chancellor of the Republic of Austria in April 1932. He had good nerves, a firm will and a consuming ambition to play the strong man, but his political vision was limited. Upon Hitler's assumption of power in January 1933, Dollfuss faced two immediate and pressing problems: (a) How to consolidate his position at home; and (b) where to find Great-Power backing sufficient to offset the activities of the Austrian Nazis, whom he was determined to oppose, but who

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patterned on that of the Communists. . . . They are distinguished by the most intense hatred of the Church and by a clear-cut anti-Clerical attitude, and will not shrink from any means in order to achieve their cultural-political aims." While the allusion here is to the situation after February 1934, this statement represents what Schuschnigg also chose to think were the Socialist views before 1934.

<sup>1</sup> *Protokoll des Sozialdemokratischen Parteitagcs*, 1926 (Vienna, 1926).

<sup>2</sup> Writers friendly to the Social Democrats have agreed for several years that the events of February 1934 resulted from a decision to smash the Party which Dollfuss made after "a number of conferences outside the country". This conclusion was based on perceptive interpretation of somewhat spotty evidence rather than on completely firm documentation. Even the most venturesome of these writers has not suggested, however, that Dollfuss agreed in principle to this course of action as early as July 1933. Gedyne, *op. cit.*, p. 82; also M. W. Fodor, *Plot and Counterplot in Central Europe* (Boston, 1937); Frederick L. Schuman, *Europe on the Eve* (New York, 1939).

now had the full weight of the German Government behind them.

With respect to these problems Dollfuss had two alternatives: (a) He might seek reconciliation with the Socialists, reject both the German and Italian varieties of Fascism, and place the fate of a democratic Austria squarely up to Great Britain and France; <sup>1</sup> or (b) basing his internal policy on a consolidation of indigenous Austrian authoritarian elements, he might seek Great-Power support in Fascist Italy.

Dollfuss chose the second course. He probably did not realise at first that he had delivered himself into the hands of Mussolini and the Austrian *Heimwehr*, because he was not fully aware of the weakness of his position. The weakness of his position was due, among other things, to the fact that he had begun his authoritarian revolution in Austria without adequate authoritarian apparatus to carry it through. His own party—the Christian-Social—was a loosely-knit affair, and was divided on many critical issues, including that of authoritarianism *vs.* democracy. Dollfuss did not control the party machinery; in fact, some of the outstanding Christian Social leaders—Vaugoin, Kunschak, Josef Reither—were for various reasons either actively opposed to Dollfuss' policies or followed his lead with extreme reluctance. Most important of all, the party lacked storm-troopers to do the dirty work involved in counter-revolutionary action.

That is where Starhemberg and the *Heimwehr* came in. The *Heimwehr*, like the National Socialist Party, had its roots in the bands of free-booters that sprang up in Austria, as in Germany shortly after the armistice in 1918, and assumed the task of "preserving order". Consolidation of these groups gradually occurred, but mainly on a provincial basis, and

<sup>1</sup> The apologists for Dollfuss deny that he had any such alternatives as above stated. They maintain that only the second policy, which was the one he adopted, could have been adopted in the circumstances prevailing at the time. Their position is based on the contention that even if Dollfuss had sought and achieved solidarity with the Social Democrats, the British and French still would not have supported him if it came to a show-down with the Nazis, or the Italians, or both. This argument is based on the assumption that the British and French were committed in 1933 to a policy of appeasement in *all circumstances*; while it has a certain plausibility, the assumption still cannot be proved. It is conceivable, at least, that a demonstration of real democratic solidarity in Austria might have helped create democratic solidarity in neighbouring countries, and thereby might have encouraged the British and French to take the risks involved in a strong Central European policy.



bitter personal rivalry between the provincial leaders remained an important feature of the *Heimwehr* movement. These personal rivalries were never resolved because the *Heimwehr* as a whole never decided whether it preferred a purely Austrian or a Pan-German Fascism. Consequently the story of the *Heimwehr* is one of continuous secessions, and almost invariably the renegade *Heimwehrists* turned up eventually in the Nazi camp. The most blatant example of this collusion between *Heimwehrists* and Nazis was in the province of Styria, where the *Heimwehr* had been financed and nourished by the Alpine Montan, the biggest industrial concern in Austria, and by Friz Mandl, the armaments man. One fine day most of the Styrian *Heimwehr* changed into brown shirts.

The man who finally emerged as national leader of the *Heimwehr* was Prince Starhemberg, a young Austrian aristocrat, who had started out as an "old fighter" in the Nazi ranks. He had organised the *Heimwehr* in his home province of Upper Austria and for years had financed it out of his private fortune. According to his own account, Starhemberg was advised by Hitler in the spring of 1930 to solicit support from the Duce, and he first visited Mussolini in July of that year. Starhemberg had fallen into financial difficulties. He eventually received 2,000,000 Austrian Schillings from Mussolini, who also agreed to make available to the *Heimwehr* 50,000 rifles and "a corresponding number of machine-guns" taken from the Austro-Hungarian army at the end of the first world war; the *Heimwehr*, in turn, agreed to smuggle other weapons from the old Imperial supply to Gömbös, the Hungarian Prime Minister.<sup>1</sup> This deal was exposed by the *Arbeiter-Zeitung*, Socialist newspaper in Vienna, causing Mussolini public embarrassment, since Hungarian import of arms from abroad was forbidden by treaties to which Italy was a signatory.

By 1933 the *Heimwehr* had definitely become an instrument of Italian policy. *Heimwehr* leaders were in constant touch with Mussolini's agents in Austria, and Starhemberg frequently consulted with the Duce. Mussolini wanted satellite regimes in

<sup>1</sup> R. von Starhemberg, *Between Hitler and Mussolini* (New York, 1942), p. 21. For the balancing of the record, it ought to be noted that the Socialists, too, engaged upon occasion in illicit smuggling of arms. In order to help Bela Kun, Julius Deutsch, at that time Socialist Secretary for the Armed Forces, "connived at the smuggling of a considerable amount of arms to Hungary". In later years the Czech Government connived at obtaining weapons for the Republican Defence Corps of the Austrian Socialists, Julius Braunthal, *In Search of the Millennium* (London, 1946), pp. 227, 294-5.

Austria and Hungary as the nuclei in a Fascist bloc against German penetration and expansion south-eastward. At the same time, without sacrificing Italian interests, he wanted to appease the Nazis. Since he wanted the Nazis stopped, but without making them mad, he lent a ready ear to suggestions that the way to cut the ground from under the feet of the Nazis in Austria was to make a frontal attack on the Social Democrats. This was the programme he persuaded Dollfuss to espouse. In making himself dependent on the *Heimwehr*, which itself was dependent on Italian money, Dollfuss became connected with a policy which was actually inconsistent with his own aim of an independent Austria. Behind the façade of the Four-Power Pact signed at Stresa in 1933, the Rome-Berlin Axis was in the making. It was brought to the attention of Dollfuss at the time that the policy for which he had become an instrument would lead to the eventual liquidation of Austria; but he did not have the eyes to see.

### III

Dollfuss made his first journey to the fount of Fascism in April 1933. At this time he had just begun to transform Austria into an authoritarian State. The month before he had used ingenious legalistic sleight-of-hand to make the Austrian parliament disappear, he had outlawed the Republican Defence Corps (the para-military organisation of the Social Democrats), forbidden political meetings, and introduced strict laws of censorship. In order to press on along this same road, however, assurance of continued *Heimwehr* support had to be secured, and for that he needed Mussolini to anoint him as leader of the Austrian authoritarians.

Dollfuss and Mussolini hit it off at once, and Dollfuss got Mussolini's blessing. Upon his return to Vienna, at a mass meeting held in the grounds of Schönbrunn Palace, Dollfuss announced the formation of a Fascist phalanx standing above parties, to be composed of all men willing to fight for the New Idea. Prince Starhemberg spoke from the same platform that day, and associated his *Heimwehr* with the organisation, to which was given the name "Fatherland Front".

During the next weeks the Fatherland Front was the subject of large-scale ballyhoo, to which the Nazis reacted at once. Clashes between Nazis and *Heimwehrists* became more frequent, and finally on June 19 the Government suppressed

the National Socialist Party in Austria and forbade the display of Nazi insignia and uniforms. While this crisis was at its peak. Dollfuss again visited Mussolini at Rome, and shortly after his return to Vienna he received a personal letter, dated July 1, 1933, from the Duce.<sup>1</sup>

It was a big-brotherly letter. "With my experience of more than ten years with the Fascist regime in Italy, I would be very happy if I could be useful in helping Austria out of the complicated situation in which she finds herself today", Mussolini wrote. After giving Dollfuss a friendly pat for the good work he had done thus far in founding the Fatherland Front and conciliating the *Heimwehr*, he strongly urged him "to carry through at once a programme of effective and basic internal reforms in the decisive Fascist sense". This involved, he explained, not merely, or mainly, constitutional "reform" as such, but rather a programme of action with respect to the political opponents of the regime—the Nazis and the Social Democrats. Mussolini elaborated his views about how Dollfuss should treat the Austrian Nazis and Social Democrats.

As for the Nazis, he thought that the Austrian Government was approaching the problem which they posed in the wrong way; he considered it unfortunate that the impression was being given "that Austria pursued a policy of suppression solely against a movement which, for good or evil, is clothed in a national flag". If this situation continued, he feared it would come to a "state of siege" between Dollfuss and the Nazis, and he said frankly: "I hope this can be avoided". Yet Mussolini himself admitted that Dollfuss "had to react in the most energetic way against the criminal assaults which have been perpetrated recently in Austria by the Nazis". It was a dilemma.

However, Mussolini was confident that he knew the answer, and that is where the Social Democrats came in.

In themselves, Mussolini did not think the Social Democrats were a danger to the regime, for they "will always be obliged to march along the line chalked out by Your Excellency". The real danger was that the Government would not capitalise to the full on the "anti-Marxist weapon", and would allow the Nazis, who were a real danger, to come forth as the saviours of the country from Bolshevism. "That this, the most feared weapon, may be neutralised in their hands, and that thereby

<sup>1</sup> Mussolini to Dollfuss, July 1, 1933, "personal"; State Archives; Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

the disappearance of Nazism in Austria may be brought about, depends upon Your Excellency. I am convinced that, as soon as you appeal to all sound national forces in Austria, and strike a blow at the Social Democrats in their stronghold, Vienna, and extend the purge to all centres, and press hard against all the disruptive tendencies which are in opposition to the authoritarian principle of the State, then many of those who to-day are active in the ranks of the Nazis will come over to the circle of the national front."

The utility of the Red bogey as an instrument of Fascism could not have been stated more baldly. Mussolini added the threat that unless Dollfuss struck at the Social Democrats he might lose Italian support. There was a "connection", he had carefully explained, between the elaboration of "my ideas about the future development of the campaign in Austria" and "the help which Italy is providing Austria".

Dollfuss, unless he had given himself over to irresponsible delusions, must have studied this letter carefully for precise indication of the support he might expect from Italy. What he found was this: "Italian aid, in any sort of eventuality, will not decrease". When Dollfuss sat down to compose his reply, dated July 22,<sup>1</sup> he chose to puff up this statement for all it was conceivably worth. He thanked Mussolini "most cordially" for his "unreserved readiness to help".

Dollfuss evaded any direct reply to Mussolini's thesis that espousal of a strong anti-Marxist policy would win the Austrian Nazis over to his brand of Austro-Fascism. He perhaps realised, as Mussolini did not, that Austro-Fascism was equally unacceptable to both Nazis and Social Democrats. Yet although he did not delude himself with the hope that a crushing attack on the Social Democrats would bring converts from the Nazi camp whooping into the ranks of his supporters, he nevertheless agreed with Mussolini that the Social Democrats would have to be smashed. "We are determined", he therefore assured Mussolini, "to drive the Marxists from the positions of power which they still hold as soon as the situation permits it."

<sup>1</sup> Dollfuss to Mussolini, July 22, 1933, draft; State Archives, Vienna. Liasse Italian, Fasz. 477. In the file are two drafts—the first, with additions and corrections in the margin, and a clean draft, from which the above quotations are taken. Dollfuss' answer had been delayed, according to a notation in the file, because he thought that Gömbös was going to consult with him about matters concerning Austro-Hungarian relations which Mussolini had also discussed in his letter of July 1, 1933.

With this statement Dollfuss committed himself in principle to the policy which finally was carried out in February 1934.

For the present, while he proceeded according to his own plans, Dollfuss wanted Mussolini to give his support in staving off the Nazis, and he was therefore anxious to impress the Duce favourably with what he had been doing in Austria. "I have been ceaselessly occupied with preparing the ground for the creation of a strong authoritarian regime," he wrote. "First of all, much rubbish which has accumulated during the years of the Republic must be removed." Meanwhile, the newly-created Fatherland Front, which was already proving its utility, would help promote the Fascist idea. "The Fatherland Front will be built on the leader principle. I myself am the Fuehrer of the Front. In the broad lines along which this organization is being formed . . . I am honoured to be instructed by Your Excellency."

Actually Dollfuss' recital of his achievements was not such as to impress Mussolini. The Austrian public was being *prepared* for "corporate and authoritarian reforms", but as yet the Government was only *ready* to "proceed with the organisation on a corporate basis of the various branches of the Austrian export industry". The Government was *considering* measures to break the hold of the Social Democrats over the funds of the city of Vienna. Everything, it was perfectly evident, was being done in good old three-quarter time.

This was not fast enough for Mussolini and the *Heimwehr*, who wanted an all-out lunge into Fascism. Mussolini decided to turn on the charm, along with a little heat. He invited Dollfuss to visit him again, and on August 19 and 20, 1933, the Austrian Chancellor stayed at Riccione, where Mussolini, with his family around him, entertained him in an atmosphere of intimacy. Formal discussions of high policy were interspersed with affable *tête-à-têtes* in a sailboat.

Two documents indicate the range of topics discussed at Riccione. One of these, a rough draft, states in plain Italian Mussolini's views about what Dollfuss ought to do. It is quite evident that the Duce held the initiative at Riccione and presented Dollfuss with a definite set of proposals. The other document is a memorandum which Dollfuss wrote for the Foreign-Office file in order to preserve a record of what had been discussed.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Amtserinnerung*, State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

The domineering tone of the Italian document<sup>1</sup> was a pointed reminder to Dollfuss that he was already regarded as a satellite by his friends in Rome. The first two paragraphs, which are the most important ones, are as follows:

"1. The third trip to Italy—more unexpected and more sensational than the previous ones—must not result in things being left in their present *static* condition, but must signalise the beginning of a new course in Austrian domestic and foreign policy. Otherwise the trip will have been pointless and therefore harmful.

"2. Upon his return to Vienna, Dollfuss must announce an important political speech for early September—that is, on the evening before the announced *putsch*. This speech must precede a series of actions of a kind which will stir up and rouse the Austrians from their depressed morale. To be explicit: (a) Immediate strengthening of the Government by bringing in new elements (Steidle,<sup>2</sup> Starhemberg) who will take away from the present Government its character of being composed simply of a residue from the old regime. (b) Fusion of all forces and of all fronts into a single national front with the motto: the independence of Austria and the renovation of Austria. (c) Pronounced dictatorial character of the Government. (d) A Government Commissioner for the city of Vienna. (e) Propaganda on a large scale."

The rest of the Italian memorandum is an outline of the topics to be discussed in Dollfuss' speech, and the slant he should give them. Dollfuss assented readily enough to Mussolini's suggestions about the speech, whose date was set for September 11: he was to state his programme for Austria, with the slogan: "The independence of Austria and the renovation of Austria".

Divergence of opinion, however, developed at Riccione over the tempo at which this programme ought to be carried out, and over the question of increased *Heimwehr* participation in the Government. Mussolini argued that Austria ought to be "remoulded" at once before the end of September, and he spoke significantly of the *putsch* which was anticipated immediately after the speech. Since Mussolini urged, and expected,

<sup>1</sup> In the file is a rough draft of the Italian text and the translation in German: *B.K. Dr. Dollfuss zu unterbreitende Erwägungen*. State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

<sup>2</sup> Steidle was the *Heimwehr* leader in Tyrol.

the Government to establish control over the Vienna city government already before the speech of September 11, his reference to a *putsch* presumably meant that the complete liquidation of the Social-Democratic organisation was to be carried out by force immediately afterwards. Dollfuss, on the other hand, was not yet ready to smash the Social Democrats, and in his memorandum he refrained from mentioning the fact that the subject had been discussed at Riccione. He did note, however, that Mussolini had exerted pressure "to get him to agree to a fuller participation of the *Heimwehr* in the Government", but that he had been able to avoid making any commitment.

Starhemberg and the *Heimwehr* leaders were not at all pleased about the outcome of the Riccione conversations. They were particularly upset because Dollfuss had not agreed to smash the Social Democrats at once. In consequence, Starhemberg decided to make his own pilgrimage to Italy. He informed Mussolini that the *Heimwehr* was dissatisfied with the pace at which the Chancellor intended to carry through the authoritarian revolution in Austria, and that the *Heimwehr* did not want to increase its representation in the Government until it was certain that Dollfuss was ready for decisive action.

On September 9, 1933, Mussolini wrote to Dollfuss and told him that he fully shared Starhemberg's misgivings: <sup>1</sup>

"According to the evidence of Prince Starhemberg—and it is confirmed by other reports which come to me—the National Socialist movement is still working below the surface with undiminished intensity, although it is no longer in the position to give publicity to its activities. It is Starhemberg's impression that the overwhelming majority of these so-called Nazis consists of nothing more than malcontents, who could perhaps be won over to-morrow if the Government and the parties which form the Government would agree to drive in a decisive fashion along the road to Fascism.<sup>2</sup> In this

<sup>1</sup> Mussolini to Dollfuss, September 9, 1933, State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

<sup>2</sup> The views which Mussolini attributes in this letter to Starhemberg are the reverse of those which Starhemberg in his book, *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, claims that he held at that time. Starhemberg (p. 124) maintains in retrospect that he did not think the Social Democrats were any longer a threat to Fascism in Austria, and he only wanted to fight the Nazis. As for his visit to Mussolini referred to in the letter above, Starhemberg says only (pp. 113-14) that they spent the time visiting camps for young Fascists and homes for expectant mothers.

way, the chief objection by which the Nazis justify their opposition to the regime would be removed—namely, that no sufficiently intensive and decisive activity for the renovation of the State is being shown. . . . I am convinced, Herr Chancellor, that, in view of the danger which threatens Austria, its salvation can never be achieved by coalitions parliamentary in character, but only by an organised defence, which bases itself on the youth and rallies around a new idea.”

Mussolini said that he appreciated Starhemberg's reluctance to enter the Government or to increase *Heimwehr* participation in it until Dollfuss was willing to initiate decisive action. Consequently, the pressure to add Steidle and Starhemberg to the Cabinet was taken off. However, Starhemberg was determined to have his pound of flesh, and Mussolini supported him: they demanded the heads of two *Landbund* members of the Dollfuss Cabinet, Winkler and Schumy, who were charged with sabotaging efforts “to bring the country out of the morass of liberalism and democracy”.<sup>1</sup>

Mussolini concluded:

“I should like to believe that the speech which you are to deliver on the eleventh of this month will succeed in giving a more decisive and more spirited tone to the Austrian policy of renovation, and in the expectation of learning what

<sup>1</sup> The *Landbund* was a small farmers' party which differed from the *Bauernbund*, the agricultural affiliate of the Christian Social Party in that it was largely based on the Protestant farmers and was Pan-German in outlook. The *Landbund* had joined the *Heimwehr* to give Dollfuss the parliamentary majority of one, on the basis of which he had formed his cabinet in 1932, and it was strongly infiltrated with Nazis. Subsequently, the *Landbund* went over almost *en masse* to the NSDAP. Winkler, who was Vice-Chancellor in the summer of 1933, was charged with complicity in the Nazi *putsch* of July 1934, and fled from the country. Winkler has given his version of these events in his book, *Die Diktatur in Oesterreich* (Zurich and Leipsig, 1935), a work of considerable interest. See also Arnold J. Toynbee, *Survey of International Affairs, 1934* (London, 1935), p. 458.

Schumy, unlike Winkler, kept sufficiently at a distance from the Nazis to enable him to emerge again in the new post-Nazi Austria. He brought the remnants of the *Landbund* into the Peoples' Party, the new “popular front” of everything to the Right of the Socialists, and when Renner reshuffled his provisional government in September 1945, Schumy entered it with the rank of Minister. After the elections of November 1945, when Figl made up the slate for the new cabinet, he wanted to include Schumy, but the appointment was vetoed by the Russians.



will be the further development of events in Austria, which I follow with the greatest interest, I extend to you expressions of cordial friendship".

Dollfuss, as scheduled, mustered his followers of the Fatherland Front at the Vienna Race-track on September 11 in what was carefully designed to be a show of strength. He well knew that his cohorts that day included many discordant elements. If Mussolini's letter had reached him, he must have been somewhat disturbed also by the knowledge that his speech would be very critically examined in Rome on the morrow. In any case, he knew that if he did not go far enough in the Fascist direction, he was in danger of losing *Heimwehr* support, while if his language sounded too extreme he might antagonise elements in his own Christian Social Party, and also get a bad press in France, Great Britain and the United States.

The speech had been phrased in such a way as not to repel those Austrian elements which were inclined towards authoritarianism but were not yet ready to call themselves Fascist. Although it was made transparently clear that a form of Fascism was the goal, the word "Fascism" was avoided. Instead, he chose the resounding euphemism, "Social Christian German State of Austria with a corporate basis", in order to indicate that Fascism in Austria was to have a distinctive Catholic texture. The Nazis were given clear warning that the Government did not intend to be intimidated, and the Social Democrats received a full blast.<sup>1</sup> As Kurt Schuschnigg acknowledged with, for once, disarming candour: "... the general roll-call of the Fatherland Front brought for the first time complete clarity regarding the future political objectives which Dollfuss, with the enthusiastic consent of his followers, was determined to reach".<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless, it was an uneasy time for Dollfuss. It was generally expected that he would carry through his programme in a hurry. He himself, however, was stubborn and determined to do things, so far as possible, in his own way. He was also irritated because the *Heimwehrists* were appealing over his head to Mussolini. When he reshuffled his Cabinet on September 20 he did drop Schumy and Winkler; but Major Fey, the Vienna *Heimwehr* leader, who held the key post of Public Security in the Cabinet, was promoted upstairs to the Vice-

<sup>1</sup> *Neues Wiener Journal*, September 12, 1933.

<sup>2</sup> *My Austria*, p. 214.

Chancellorship, and Dollfuss himself took the portfolios of Defence, Public Security, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture. For the time being, although his hands were actually still tied, Dollfuss could enjoy the illusion of being undisputed boss, and with the police and army under his direct control, the *Heimwehr* at least would think twice before attempting any overt action contrary to his will.

Dollfuss felt that Mussolini in his letter of September 9 had prodded him unnecessarily, and before answering it on September 22 he asked Herr Schüller, his crack specialist for economic negotiations, who was in Rome, to let Mussolini know that the kind of pressure he had recently been exerting was somewhat resented. On September 15, 1933, Schüller went in to see Mussolini, and reported as follows to Dollfuss.<sup>1</sup>

It had been a friendly interview. Mussolini had said kind words about Dollfuss' speech. Schüller informed the Duce that Dollfuss was sensitive about insinuations that he was merely dallying with the draft of the new constitution, and had directed him to say that "within a short time Austria will have a new political and economic statute. The Federal Chancellor had used the image that he marches quickly, but does not like to have his friends push him from behind—that disturbs the march".

At this, "Mussolini laughed heartily and said it would be fine if Austria soon gets a constitution. . . . Its execution will take the props out from under the National Socialist agitation in Austria. 'The Austrians are too fine to carry it out in such a way as to make enemies of the whole world as the Germans have done. Italy will then be able to help Austria much better than at present, because a certain inner affinity will exist which will strengthen Italy's position over against Germany. Now the Germans throw it up to me that I support a government against them which has not disposed of Austro-Marxism and Communism.' "

Schüller then brought up the various reports indicating that the Nazis were preparing to step up their campaign in Austria, and he suggested that an armed assault from across the border was a distinct possibility. Mussolini pooh-poohed the likelihood of such an attack. "*J'exclu l'idée d'une invasion*" [!? red-pencilled in margin], he said; but he added that if an invasion were to occur "we would react with military measures against it. I

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 377.

have already told that to the Chancellor and I repeat it.<sup>1</sup> We have already made certain preparations to meet such a case. I hope the Germans do not do it and do not begin that sort of conflict with the only friend they have left”.

Dollfuss was reassured by this indication of Mussolini's good will and support. In a short letter dated September 22<sup>2</sup> he informed the Duce that he was very serious about the programme he had announced in his speech, and was “determined to translate it into action energetically and with especial regard for Austrian conditions”. This was a way of saying that he hoped Mussolini would permit him to do things his own way for a while, and not to expect that the Fascist pattern in Austria would be the exact replica of that in Italy.

#### IV

Since Dollfuss had shown himself huffy, and disinclined to make himself too obviously a tool of Italian policy, Mussolini allowed him for three months to go his own pace. By the end of 1933, however, the Duce decided that he had given Dollfuss time enough to do things in his own way and at his own speed. In January, 1934, he sent the Italian Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Suvich, to Vienna to inform Dollfuss that the time for action was at hand. Suvich was also to size up the political situation and tell the Duce whether or not it would be wise to continue to string along with Dollfuss, or to let him fall.

During the weeks just prior to Suvich's arrival, Dollfuss had been floundering. The increase in the number of overt acts committed by Nazis in Austria indicated to him that he must try a new tack, but he was uncertain about which way to turn. First, following a hint from Berlin, he agreed to negotiate direct with Herr Habicht, Provincial Inspector of the National Socialist Party in Austria. Habicht had been directing the Nazi campaign from his headquarters in Munich. The date for the meeting was set for January 8, 1934, but when Habicht's plane was already on the way Dollfuss<sup>3</sup> cancelled the appoint-

<sup>1</sup> In his *Amtserinnerung* on the Riccione conversations, Dollfuss had noted: “If, contrary to Herr Mussolini's expectation, an invasion from Bavaria should occur, Italy would react with military measures. Nevertheless it was quite clear that Mussolini prefers to continue as long as possible the methods of ‘friendly conversations in Berlin’”. State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

<sup>2</sup> Dollfuss to Mussolini, September 22, 1933 (draft), State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

ment. Starheimberg claims <sup>1</sup> that he and Stockinger, one of Dollfuss' intimate advisers, persuaded him to change his mind at the last minute. Dollfuss now took the opposite course of notifying the Berlin Government, on January 17, that unless illegal activities ceased, Austria would have to consider bringing the question to the attention of the League of Nations Council.

Meanwhile, Dollfuss transferred to Vice-Chancellor Fey the portfolios of Defence and Public Security on January 11. In thus putting the key positions for the internal control of Austria in the hands of the *Heimwehr*, Dollfuss indicated that he was no longer master of the situation. So uncertain was he that he listened on January 14 to Social Democratic overtures brought by a leader named Schneeberger.<sup>2</sup>

The arrival of Suvich on January 18 put an end to the period of indecision. Suvich stayed three days. It was a ceremonial occasion, publicised in such a way as to let the whole world know the role which Italy now played in Austrian affairs.

Upon his return to Rome, Suvich informed Dollfuss on January 26 <sup>3</sup> that he must immediately carry out the policies to which he had agreed in principle months before; otherwise the Italian Government would have to reconsider its whole attitude towards him. When Dollfuss read the following sentences, he knew very well that this was their meaning. Suvich had written:

"After my short visit to Austria I hastened to convey my impressions to the Chief of State.

"I told him . . . that the active elements, especially the youthful supporters of the Government, were ready to retain their trust in the Government only if a greater decisiveness and precision became visible in carrying out the work of renovation, which is based on a few sharply outlined principles: the fight against Marxism, the reform of the constitution in an anti-parliamentary and corporative sense, the elimination of parties and the strengthening of the Fatherland Front; finally, that the moment for carrying out this more decisive work can no longer be postponed. . . .

"The great popularity which the Federal Chancellor enjoyed at the time of his entry into the political life of

<sup>1</sup> *Between Hitler and Mussolini*, pp. 115-17.

<sup>2</sup> Fodor, *Plot and Counterplot in Central Europe*, p. 217.

<sup>3</sup> Suvich to Dollfuss, January 26, 1934, "*streng vertraulich*" and "*persönlich*". State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

Austria was due above all to the conviction that he was the new man who would clean away all the rubbish of the former democratic Austria; furthermore, it is necessary in this connection to give the Austrian public no reasons for a disillusionment which would cause the people to turn to the Nazis, in whom they see a firm will for action.

"This kind of action—that is, a decisive will for renovation—has justified the defence against Nazi terrorism, and this defence must be carried on with the greatest energy. In this respect, the circumstance that the direction of all political forces has now been given to Vice-Chancellor Fey inspires confidence and trust.

"Under these circumstances, I have told the Head of the Government that I consider the cause of Austrian independence and the regime embodied by Your Excellency capable of being saved.

"I remarked also that a kind of conspiracy exists, which is partly inspired, partly unconscious, to play up all Nazi activities, since greater significance is attributed to them than they really have. This is a danger, and indeed a serious danger, since it creates a state of mind of the 'inevitable'. This danger could be eliminated if the Austrian Government carries out the measures indicated above, which all sound elements in the country now expect and consider urgent.

"The Head of the Government has agreed with my presentation. He has authorised me to be determined to the end in supporting Austria in her fight to maintain her independence.

"The Head of the Government also thinks it is of the greatest importance to satisfy the active and youthful formations which wish decisive, quick action; it is precisely these people who are willing to risk their lives and to show publicly where they stand—something which is at present more than ever necessary. The Federal Chancellor cannot depend absolutely on the middle-class people, who stay at home, and who, in order to live quietly, are ready to accept any sort of regime to-morrow.

"It is probable that my visit will have as a result a certain revival of enthusiasm for the Austrian Government; advantage must be taken of this in order to emphasise its idealistic qualities, which alone are capable of attracting the sound portion of the population and the youth. . . .

"The Head of the Government has the impression that it

seldom happens that the fate of an entire country can depend, as it does now, on well-timed decisions, and no one is better qualified than you, from every point of view, to act and take care of the pressing problems of the current situation."

It was perfectly evident that the Italians expected action, and soon. For their part, Mussolini and Suvich had given nothing in return, beyond another broad assurance of devotion to the cause of Austrian independence. Dollfuss was soon to learn how hollow this promise was.

Dollfuss' reply to Suvich on January 30<sup>1</sup> was the short acknowledgment of a man who knew what was expected of him, and who was ready to do it. He wrote: "The popular mood which has been so favourably influenced by you will not remain unexploited from our side, and the tempo of our activity already shows a perceptible quickening". This carefully-worded sentence would suffice to inform the Italians that everything was going according to schedule.

The work upon which the new Minister of Public Security and Defence, Major Fey, was engaged gave evidence of the perceptible quickening in the Government's positive activity. On January 31 *Heimwehr* formations seized the provincial government buildings at Innsbruck, ousted the elected authorities, and reconstituted the government of Tyrol to suit themselves. Similar occurrences took place in Upper Austria on February 6, in Styria and Burgenland on February 7, in Lower Austria and Salzburg on February 9. Social Democratic headquarters were raided, leaders were arrested, arms of the outlawed Republican Defence Corps were found. Fey was able to announce the discovery of a "Bolshevist-Marxist plot". On February 9 Dollfuss conferred with *Heimwehr* leaders. The next day, as had long been threatened, Fey removed the Vienna police from the jurisdiction of Karl Seitz, the popular Social Democratic mayor, and installed a security commissioner directly responsible to himself. And on February 11 he spoke to his *Heimwehr* men and said: "The conversations of the last two days have given us the assurance that Chancellor Dr. Dollfuss is our man. . . . To-morrow we are going to do the work and we will do a thorough job for our Fatherland." <sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dollfuss to Suvich, January 30, 1934. *Privatschreiben. Streng Geheim.* State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

<sup>2</sup> This statement has been variously rendered in English by writers on the subject. I quote from the German text to be found in Winkler, *Diktatur in Oesterreich*, p. 97.

The Social Democrats knew what this meant, and they were certainly not taken by surprise. Three days before, in anticipation of a *putsch*, Otto Bauer had directed Julius Braunthal to draft a manifesto to the Austrian people, and Braunthal had prepared it.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, the members of the Central Committee in Vienna were demoralised by what was happening around them, and could not make up their minds what to do. A Socialist leader in Linz made the decision for them. On the evening of February 11, Richard Bernaschek, whom the Nazis were to kill at Mauthausen shortly before the military collapse in the spring of 1945, sent word to Otto Bauer that he expected a *Heimwehr* attack on the Party's office in Linz the next morning, and intended to resist. Bauer advised caution,<sup>2</sup> but when the *Heimwehr* made the scheduled attack, Bernaschek and his men did resist. The building was finally taken by storm.

That morning Dollfuss with the members of his Government and the Diplomatic Corps went in a body to St. Stephen's Cathedral to attend Mass in celebration of the anniversary of the Pope. It was just before noon. Malcolm Bullock,<sup>3</sup> writing in the year 1939, has given us the deathless description of what came next:

"Suddenly the electric light went out, which was known by all in the Cathedral to be a signal for a general strike. There was some agitation among the officials present, but the Chancellor was seen by the light of the candles on the High Altar to be clasping his hands and staring at the Host which was about to be elevated. As a man of the people his thoughts must have been with the workers at that moment."

Soon after he left the cathedral, Dollfuss proclaimed martial law. Actually the general strike did not materialise, and the Socialist rank-and-file assumed the role of spectators, but several thousand Austrians, most of them members of the Republican Defence Corps in Steyr, Vienna, Graz and some other communities, took up arms. By war-time standards it was not much of a fight, but it was a kind of gesture in the face of fate

<sup>1</sup> Braunthal, *op. cit.*, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup> Schuman, *Europe on the Eve*, p. 72. In the pamphlet which he wrote just after these events, when he had escaped to Czechoslovakia, Bauer says that if the men in Linz had not been so impetuous, and had allowed the Government to manifest its full intentions, the working class as a whole would have given the uprising far greater support.—*Austrian Democracy under Fire* (1934), p. 36.

<sup>3</sup> *Austria, 1918-38: A Study in Failure* (London, 1939), pp. 247-48.

which rarely occurs in the modern State, because it is hopeless. These men knew that they lacked weapons, that the army, the police, the *Heimwehr* were against them, that they could not count on help from abroad. Nevertheless, they barricaded themselves in the big modern working-class apartments and fought, and in some instances refused to surrender until field pieces had been fired at short range against them. In three days most of the shooting was over, but several hundred Social Democrats had lost their lives. Losses of the Government forces as officially announced were 102.

## V

Dollfuss had undoubtedly hoped that the Social Democrats would allow him to complete their elimination as a political force in Austria without a struggle. Yet in spite of the fact that the Social Democrats had acted for two years as if they had little fight left in them, Dollfuss must have realised the likelihood of bloodshed when he agreed to follow the Mussolini-*Heimwehr* line. He had finally given Major Fey full rein when Nazi activity placed his regime in jeopardy, and when he was in danger of losing Italian support.

What did the Italian support amount to? Already before the fighting began on February 12, Dollfuss had his answer. It was contained in the sequel to the note of January 17, in which he had informed the Berlin Government that unless Nazi activity against Austria ceased, the Austrian Government must consider bringing the question up before the League of Nations Council.

The reply from Berlin had come on February 1, and it was "thoroughly unsatisfactory". Rome was immediately consulted. The Italian Government unhesitatingly explained that it wished no serious quarrel with the Nazis over Austria.

It was typical of Austrian conditions at that time that the responsibility in Rome for arguing the Austrian case against the Nazis had been charged to Rintelen, leader of a Nazi clique within the Styrian *Heimwehr*, and the man picked by the Nazis to succeed Dollfuss in the attempted *putsch* of July, 1934, which cost Dollfuss his life.

Suvich told Rintelen that the Italian Government opposed taking the Austrian case against the Nazis to the Council of the League. He argued that since Germany had withdrawn from the League she would not be a party to the discussions which



concerned her, and that League proceedings would take too long. Italy wanted to discuss the question quietly with the British and the French. Rintelen then asked Suvich if he might inform the Austrian Government that "it could reckon on the support of Italy under all circumstances". Suvich "affirmed absolutely" that he could, "while adding that he had instructed the Italian envoy in Vienna by telegraph . . . to request the Austrian Government to do nothing until the Italian Government had time to study the matter".<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, the French and Czech Governments encouraged Dollfuss to go ahead with an appeal to the League Council, and the British, although somewhat hesitant, took a more positive attitude than the Italians. Consequently, after his Ministerial Council had considered the question at two sittings, Dollfuss was authorised to go ahead and present the case to the League. At this point the Italian Government stepped in again and suggested that, before doing anything further, the Austrian Government should submit its dossier against the Nazis to the three Powers so that they could study the matter more fully.

A memorandum sent to all chiefs of mission by the Austrian Foreign Office on March 6, 1934,<sup>2</sup> to inform them of the course of negotiations, describes what happened next. After studying the Austrian dossier, Great Britain, France and Italy issued a joint *communiqué* on February 17, 1934, reiterating their common belief in "the necessity of maintaining Austria's independence and integrity". "It should be added here for the sake of completeness", the Austrian memorandum explained, "that the Royal Italian Government, without prejudicing its parallel stand taken with the other two Great Powers, takes the view, and expressed the hope, that after publication of the *communiqué* explaining the common attitude of the three Great Powers, the appeal of Austria to the League of Nations would no longer be necessary."

That was the end of Dollfuss' scheme to place his Nazi problem squarely in the lap of the League Council. He had to abandon it because his policy towards the Social Democrats, undertaken upon the urging of Italy and the *Heimwehr*, had

<sup>1</sup> Rintelen to Dollfuss, Rome, February 2, 1934: *Gespräch mit dem Unterstaatssekretär für Äusseres über die österreichisch-deutschen Beziehungen*. State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Deutschland, Fasz. 466.

<sup>2</sup> *Die Befassung des Völkerbundes mit dem Konflikt zwischen Deutschland und Oesterreich und die Entree zu Dritt in Rom*; State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Deutschland, Fasz. 466.

weakened his standing in world opinion, and because the Italians, from whom he might have hoped to receive the largest measure of support, let him fall flat on his face.

Italian policy, more than the Duce probably admitted to himself at the time, was headed straight towards the Berlin-Rome axis. Some Central European experts in London and Paris reputedly saw this, even if Dollfuss did not, and an Austrian agent passed their opinions on to the Austrian Chancellery in the months prior to the February fighting.<sup>1</sup> Dollfuss saw some of this agent's reports and initialled them with a big red "D".

For example, on November 14, 1933, the agent had reported that, according to his "London informant", Professor Seton Watson, the British specialist on Central Europe, had said: "Great concern prevails in all political circles in London about the present situation in Austria. An Austro-Fascist solution which will not soon give way to National Socialism is considered impossible".

A few days later, on November 22, the agent had given an account of a meeting which was said to have taken place at the Foreign Office with Mr. Sergeant, secretary of the Central European section; Mr. Allen Leeper, chief of the League of Nations section; Mr. Rex Leeper, Foreign Office press chief, and Professor Seton Watson in attendance. Sergeant was reported to "incline toward the opinion, frequently heard here [in London] that an Austro-Fascist totalisation, which does not sooner or later deteriorate into National Socialism, scarcely appears possible, and that a broadening of the political base in another direction will have to be sought. It is rather clear to Mr. Sergeant, on the other hand, that the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party in Austria has taken an unacceptable position, just as practical Socialist policy in all countries operates at present in such an intolerable fashion. . . . However, he considers the immediate and violent annihilation of Socialism unnecessary, since Socialism everywhere on the Continent is preparing its own successive collapse. . . ." <sup>2</sup>

Already on September 17, 1933, the agent had reported

<sup>1</sup> I am not suggesting that these views mirror the official attitudes of the French and British Governments at that time. They do represent—if the agent was an accurate reporter—a correct appraisal of the situation by experts close to the policy makers in both London and Paris, and they were certainly shared by the agent himself, who was obviously seeking to influence his own Government to mend its ways.

<sup>2</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Fasz. 1006.

somewhat similar views by Louis Eisenmann, the French expert on Austrian history. Professor Eisenmann had been visiting in Austria, and he was quoted as having said that while France for the present was giving Italy precedence in Austrian matters, the fears of many Frenchmen—"that Italy might encourage a development in Austria which finally would lead to the establishment of a North-South Fascist front—had not been eliminated". He went on to say:

"Recently three French experts studied the domestic political situation in Austria and came to rather uniform conclusions. Their judgment of the situation is pessimistic. . . . It is their opinion that the Dollfuss Cabinet has too little resonance in the population, and they do not believe that one should be fooled by the elaborate political rallies, since in general the situation is not to be so correctly sized up in Vienna as in the western provinces.

"Eisenmann stressed the fact that the President of the French Republic seriously interests himself in the Austrian question, and that the three experts were told to report personally to Lebrun—a quite extraordinary and unusual thing.

"Diplomatically expressed, France wants noticeable respect to be observed for Western European views on the reorganisation of Austria, in order that France will be in an inner-political situation to give Austria further help. [! blue-pencilled in margin.]

"In reality France has the aim of hindering an Austro-Fascist solution. And, indeed, for various reasons.

"It is clear to the French that the Government cannot afford to collaborate openly with the Social-Democrats, but the anti-Marxist course ought nevertheless to be somewhat corrected. For example, the French would be very much displeased if a governmental commissioner should be installed in Vienna. They are very exactly informed about the mistakes of the Social-Democrats; . . . but Eisenmann has the impression that Dollfuss would not lose anything by an empowering act approved by parliament; actually all previous emergency decrees could be legalized retroactively. He believes he is in a position to know that the Social-Democrats will finally make no demand other than that they be permitted to carry on their activity in strictly legal forms. . . . In speaking of Social Democracy, the French in no sense

mean the Wienzeile [the seat of the headquarters of the Social Democratic Party], since one has sufficient understanding in France of the evil effects of a doctrinaire policy, but one notices with interest certain differences among the Social-Democrats, which could make it possible to guide this party back into an Austrian course. One must, however, give the party time to find its way back.”<sup>1</sup>

Even if Dollfuss, in the autumn of 1933, had wished to follow the advice which he was receiving from these French and British observers and to seek a *rapprochement* with the Social-Democrats, he could not have done it, because it was too late. In June it might still have been possible; but he had missed his chance and had chosen to move, instead, into the camp of Mussolini and the *Heimwehr*. Having made himself dependent on their support, there was for Dollfuss no turning back, and the events which followed were the logical consequence of the course which he had deliberately taken. The hollowness of the Italian arguments that action against the Social Democrats would bring him the support of the Nazis and under-cut the whole Nazi position in Austria was evident immediately after the February fighting. The Nazis had been the great gainers as a result of his policy.

In a revealing memoir which he composed just at the end of the recent war, Karl Renner, middle-of-the-road Socialist and now the elder-statesman President of the new Austria, explained how the Socialist rank-and-file reacted to the events of February 1934: “The workers,” he writes, “turned away in resignation from their own State and came to the conclusion that if Fascism were unavoidable, the anti-Clerical variety of the Germans was preferable to that oriented towards Italy and the Catholic Church. That meant, in terms of foreign policy, that four years later the mass of the workers allowed annexation to take place without objection and also were soon taken in by the dazzling successes of Hitler. Without Dollfuss in 1934, Hitler would never have been able to achieve such a stupefyingly easy success in Austria in 1938.”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Fasz. 1006.

<sup>2</sup> *Denkschrift über die Geschichte der Unabhängigkeitserklärung Oesterreichs* (Vienna, 1945), p. 15.

# DOCUMENTS FROM THE AUSTRIAN STATE ARCHIVES

*Mussolini to Dollfuss* <sup>1</sup>

*Rome, July 1, 1933.*

*Personal*

HERR CHANCELLOR,

I follow with the liveliest interest the development of the situation in Austria, which has given me opportunity to appreciate the firmness and skill with which Your Excellency directs the policy of the country.

I have already let Your Excellency know that, whatever may happen, Italian aid will not decrease, and I have so far as possible sought to take into account Your Excellency's wishes as expressed to me from time to time

From numerous reports which I have received, and which I consider accurate, on the situation in Austria, I have become convinced that in this country is occurring a true reawakening of patriotic feeling, which is polarised around the ideas of the independence of the state and the historic mission of German Austria. As Your Excellency will remember, it has always been my idea that, in order to give an ideal aim to the movement led by Your Excellency, it would be essential to unfurl these colours and to nourish these feelings.

I consider the idea of creating the Fatherland Front a very good one and believe that, the more it is successful, just so much more will the different parties, which fight for the national interest of Austria, fuse.

I am also happy to know that the *Heimwehr*, on whom Your Excellency, as I have always believed, ought chiefly to count, measures up to its problem and has adapted itself completely to the policy which Your Excellency is developing.

The interest with which I follow the situation in Austria permits me to elaborate for you some of my ideas about the future development of the campaign and this also in connection with the help which Italy is providing Austria.

I am fully aware that Your Excellency must react in the

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477. In the file are the original in Italian, signed by Mussolini, and the translation in German.

most energetic way against the criminal assaults which have been perpetrated recently in Austria, and for which the National Socialists are responsible, even if it should come to a state of siege—much as I wish that this may be avoided.

I am meanwhile of the opinion that exactly because Your Excellency is compelled to carry through this stringent police action, the necessity is more than ever compelling at this time to carry through a programme of effective and basic internal reforms in the decisive Fascist sense. This appears to me to be expedient first of all in order to prevent the assertion that Austria pursues a policy of suppression solely against a movement which, for good or evil, is clothed in a national flag; furthermore, in order to attract the youth—upon whom the national front must count without reservation—with the splendour of an idea capable of giving promise of a future for Austria.

If this resurgence is real—and I believe the popular support for the direction given to Austrian policy by Your Excellency indicates that it is—then I am of the opinion that one must promote the movement by a more clear and more precise attitude toward internal reforms.

I am not unaware of the opportunistic reasons which thus far have caused Your Excellency not to take that determined stand against the Social-Democratic Party which is contained in your programme for the internal rebuilding of Austria. Nevertheless, I believe that apprehensions of a parliamentary nature are now of secondary importance. Also, relative to the planned constitutional reform, I think that the Social-Democratic Party, in view of the greater danger of Nazism and in the interest of a restoration of normal political life in Austria as soon as possible, will be obliged, as always, to march along the line sketched out by Your Excellency. If, instead, the Social Democratic Party is treated with consideration, it appears to me that the much greater and more concrete danger exists that thereby the anti-Marxist weapon will be delivered into the hands of the Nazis and they will be enabled at a given moment to play the role of saviours. That this, the most feared weapon, may be neutralised in their hands, and that thereby the disappearance of Nazism in Austria may be brought about, depends upon Your Excellency. I am convinced that, as soon as you appeal to all sound national forces in Austria, and strike a blow at the Social-Democrats in their stronghold, Vienna, and extend the purge to all centres, and press hard

against all the disruptive tendencies which are in opposition to the authoritarian principle of the State, then many of those who to-day are active in the ranks of the Nazis will come over to the circle of the national front.

I am sure that Your Excellency will approve of the frankness of my remarks, and I assure you that I would be very happy if I, with my experience of more than ten years with the Fascist regime in Italy, could be useful in helping Austria out of the complicated situation in which she finds herself to-day.

Since I now come to speak about another theme—namely, the systematising of the Danubian countries, which at present is a topic of lively interest in world opinion—I feel urged to say to Your Excellency that in my judgment it is desirable to act without delay along the lines which we have already discussed and with relation to which we have found ourselves in agreement.

The most urgent appears to me to be a closer accord between Austria and Hungary. I have occupied myself at various meetings and also most recently on the occasion of the London Conference <sup>1</sup> with this aim.

This has nothing to do with laying the foundations for a personal union of Austria and Hungary and the restoration of the Hapsburgs, as is fancifully represented these days in a certain Press <sup>2</sup> where these objectives are ascribed to Italian policy. Italy takes the position of rejecting this outcome, since it regards these eventualities as detrimental to both countries and to the general European interest.

The policy of close co-operation between Austria and Hungary, in both political and economic matters, must, as Italy views it, start off with a formal agreement by both governments to follow a common policy.

This accord is for me the necessary presupposition for other interesting and most promising developments. Under the auspices and active help of Italy the accord would enable both countries to enter into negotiations with their neighbours without thereby being subject to excessive economic pressure and without making it appear as though they subordinated themselves to other politically stronger states. This will be able to help, afterwards, in the creation of a system of treaties with the countries of the *Little Entente*, on the one hand, and with Germany on the other, since Austria and Hungary,

<sup>1</sup> Where the Tardieu plan for a Danubian accord was discussed.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably the Czech.

thanks to their very intimate connection with Italy, avoid any danger of open or concealed absorption.

I should like to move forward at a very fast tempo along this road, but I wish to take no initiative until an absolute and complete agreement exists between our two governments and Hungary. One will then have to consider—and here I have in mind assuming the leading role myself—how to create a favourable atmosphere among the other interested States for this initiative, and indeed also in respect to the broader developments which I have indicated above.

While I am turning to President Gömbös at the same time in order to inform him and to sketch for him this picture of the situation, I wish Your Excellency would communicate to me in all frankness your views on these matters. It is obviously an initiative of great sanctity; if it is to succeed a good beginning is essential. In expectation of Your Excellency's answer I recommend myself to you with hearty respect and my cordial greetings.

MUSSOLINI.

2

*Draft*

*Dollfuss to Mussolini*<sup>1</sup>

*July 22, 1933.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I was honoured to acknowledge directly by telephone some days ago your esteemed friendly letter of the first of the month and to express my deep-felt gratitude for the serious and friendly interest which Your Excellency devotes to the fate of Austria, and I take the liberty of replying immediately after thoroughly studying the problems raised.

Since I am now permitted to express again my most humble thanks for the suggestions, so worthy of consideration and motivated by a spirit of such true friendship, as well as for the words of approbation, which Your Excellency was so kind as to

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477. In the file are two drafts—a first draft with additions and corrections in the margin, and a clean draft from which this translation has been made. A notation in the file indicates that Dollfuss' answer to Mussolini's letter of July 1, 1933, had been delayed because Dollfuss thought that Gömbös would consult with him; but he didn't.



render to my efforts, I permit myself to set forth, with all the frankness which so fortunately characterises our personal relations, my views on both questions discussed in Your Excellency's letter.

With respect to the general inner-political situation in Austria, Your Excellency—as I have perceived from your much-esteemed letter—is kept informed continuously and in an excellent way by Signor Preziosi,<sup>1</sup> so that I can limit myself here solely to discussing the questions which Your Excellency has touched in the much-esteemed letter and which appear to me to be of importance for the correct characterisation of the internal situation of Austria

With respect to the necessity, emphasised by Your Excellency, of speedy introduction of internal reforms in the sense of a corporative and authoritarian constitution, I share completely Your Excellency's view that the Austrian federal Government dare not tolerate for an instant a suspension of activity directed towards the achievement of a firm public authority. Your Excellency knows as a result of our conversations that I have been for a long time occupying myself constructively with these ideas. Since the parliamentary crisis of last year which opened up the present phase of the internal political situation in Austria, I have been ceaselessly occupied with preparing the ground for the creation of a strong authoritarian regime which, according to my conviction, is best suited to my country. It is clear that first of all much rubbish which has accumulated during the years of the Republic must be removed. I am also aware that much in addition has to be done here. I must certainly mention in this connection that my serious efforts in this sense are being perceptibly hemmed by the National Socialists, who have attacked me from the rear, and who, in unpardonable fashion, are giving aid partly direct, partly indirect, to Marxism. Nevertheless I do not let myself be turned from the path towards my goal. I have just taken into my Cabinet as Minister without Portfolio the former Federal Chancellor, Dr. Ender, who is without question one of the best and most successful administrative jurists in Austria, and I have entrusted him exclusively with the task of working out a thorough-going reform of the constitution in the above sense.

Before commissioning him I have discussed my views at length with Dr. Ender, and I understand that he is determined

<sup>1</sup> Italian envoy in Vienna.

out of inner conviction to follow the course indicated by me. There can be no doubt but that no one in Austria to-day has any idea that the *Bundesrat* will be continued with its previous functions, nor can there be any doubt that the general wish prevails to carry through a remodelling of the *Bundesrat* into a corporative body with far-reaching legislative powers. I believe I can say that this general shift in Austrian public opinion towards corporative and authoritarian reforms is largely due to the tireless efforts of the Government, which has so impressed the consciousness of the public by repeated repetition with the necessity for which it is striving, that a favourable atmosphere for carrying out the various important steps has been created. For example, the idea of corporative representation, which a short time ago was not understood, and for related reasons was to some extent even rejected, is now already fully grasped on the part of the broad masses, so that the Government can now proceed with the organisation of the various branches of the Austrian export industry on a corporative basis.

In the same way the work in other lines will be carried forward. I am occupied furthermore with a fundamental change in the structure of existing corporate bodies (*Körperschaften*) which up till now were organised according to classes. Finally, as already mentioned, the constitution will be firmly anchored on the corporate idea, to which I have been a convinced adherent for many years.

The gratifying popularisation of these fundamental ideas seems to me to be an unmistakable indication that Marxism in Austria has been pushed back to an extent such as one would not have dared hope half a year ago. The success would assuredly have been still greater had it not been for the aggressive activity of the National Socialists against the independence of Austria. The Government is clinging unalterably to its goal of overcoming the Marxist mentality, Marxist forms and organisations, and replacing them by a patriotic attitude towards a State which stands above classes and by a corporate structure pinnacled in a State with a strong authoritarian Government. We are also determined, in this connection, to drive the Marxists from the positions of power which they still hold as soon as the situation permits it. At present we are considering how to decrease very materially the financial means which they have brought together as a result of their overwhelming influence in the city of Vienna.

On the other hand, we are giving special attention to intensive patriotic propaganda as a means of arousing a kind of Austrian patriotism such as has not existed in the post-war period, and was scarcely considered possible a few months ago. I may here point to the activity of the Fatherland Front, which Your Excellency referred to in your much-esteemed letter; in the broad lines along which this organisation is being formed, which I regard as very important, I am honoured to be instructed by Your Excellency. The Fatherland Front will be built on the leader principle; I myself am the Führer of the Front. The Fatherland Front aims at non-partisan union of all patriotic Austrians to serve the peaceful, cultural and economic development of a free, independent Austrian State. Membership in the Front therefore obviously carries with it a ban on membership in an organisation engaged in class or confessional conflict, and bound with it is the obligation to do everything possible to avoid and overcome any differences of opinion between members of the Front. This last condition, together with the non-partisan character of the Front, excludes any sort of party politics within the Front; at the same time every member of the Front joins it and is active in it not as a member of a party but as a patriot. The exclusion of advocates of class and confessional warfare naturally means that Social-Democrats and Communists are excluded.

I am getting highly valuable support in arousing a firm patriotic attitude from the members of the *Heimwehr* and their leaders. My relation to them, as Your Excellency already knows from our conversations, is excellent, and I am happy to be able to say that my views are getting full understanding and loyal support from the adherents of this movement. Especially worthy of note are their firm attitude and energetic activity against National Socialism.

With respect to the National Socialists, who half a year ago, as Your Excellency well knows, gave the Austrian Government three or four weeks longer to live, their hopes to-day may be regarded as shattered. It goes without saying that opposition to this movement continues, and that co-operation with such a movement, which makes use of anarchistic methods, is out of the question. In this connection I am impelled to thank Your Excellency most cordially for the unreserved readiness to help which Your Excellency has previously shown in this question.

To the second question on foreign policy raised by Your Excellency, I permit myself the following observations:

As Your Excellency knows, I had the pleasure a short time ago of welcoming to Vienna the Hungarian Minister-President, who in friendly fashion came at my invitation. The conversations held on this occasion with Herr von Gömbös were of considerable advantage in connection with his recent trip to Berlin and have fully clarified the situation. We have naturally agreed to maintain friendship with Italy in our foreign policy. Furthermore, we have recognised the unqualified necessity for the closest possible co-operation between Austria and Hungary in the economic sphere, but excluding any sort of fantastic plans, and we are determined to carry out most intensively and loyally the existing treaties, especially the secret exchange of notes in 1931, which already pledges both states to the closest political agreement.

We have also communicated this decision to the public in the *communiqué* on our conversations, and it can be demonstrated that in general this close co-operation was regarded by the public, both at home and abroad, as something quite natural. In the meantime, this co-operation with Hungary has already developed in a gratifying way. From this intimate and continuous exchange of ideas, a common policy in the majority of foreign-policy questions which arise will necessarily result. In this connection, however, I believe I dare not neglect to point out, in order to avoid any misunderstandings, that naturally a few immediate problems in the foreign policy of the two countries, Austria and Hungary, at present lie outside the scope of the discussion, which makes possible [*erheischt bezw. ermöglicht*] a common policy of Vienna and Budapest—for example, the problem of Soviet Russia, the question of revision of the terms of the peace treaties, and unfortunately also at present the question of relations with National Socialist Germany. Here I may add parenthetically that Austria also has the greatest interest in maintaining friendly relations with Germany, under the stipulation, to be sure, that the independence of Austria and its governmental organs will be guaranteed and respected without reservation by the German Reich Government. Before it can lead to an unravelling of the situation, this respect must find expression in demonstration by the Reich Government, and what is synonymous with it, the leadership of the NSDAP, that it is finally determined to carry out the decision to regard and to treat the National-Socialist movement in Austria as an *Austrian* movement connected with the Germans at most by bonds of sympathy, and to take a final

and definite stand against promoting or tolerating any propaganda directed against Austria as well as against any mixing in the internal affairs of Austria.

The fact that there are such questions which do not lend themselves at present to joint treatment by both countries cannot be allowed to impair common action by both countries on the question of the economic systematisation of the Danubian area which is so vital to them; as I had the pleasure of ascertaining again from Herr von Gömbös a short time ago, it is precisely with respect to economic policy that they are fully agreed that they must continue to develop and to broaden their commercial relations along the broad lines already laid down. The indispensable corollary for such a development—the support of a political and economic great power—will, I am convinced, be provided by Italy, whose interest in this development has been so eloquently and strongly indicated to me recently in the much-esteemed letter from Your Excellency.

I hope that I have given confirmation once more to Your Excellency about the far-reaching concurrence of our aims. With the expression of my most sincere respect for Your Excellency, I remain,

Yours faithfully,

D.

3

*Note to Federal Chancellor Dr. Dollfuss for his Consideration*<sup>1</sup>

1. This third trip to Italy—more unexpected and more sensational than the previous ones—must not result in things being left in their present *static* condition, but must signalise the beginning of a new course in Austrian domestic and foreign policy. Otherwise the trip will have been pointless and therefore harmful.

2. Upon his return to Vienna, Dollfuss must announce an important political speech for early September—that is, on the

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477. A rough draft of this document in the Italian language and a German translation are in the folder on Riccione. The document is undated, and no explanatory notes accompany it. It would appear to be a set of proposals presented to Dollfuss when he arrived at Riccione, or shortly thereafter, during the course of the conversations.

evening before the announced [*angekündigten*] *putsch*. This speech must precede a series of actions of a kind which will stir up and rouse the Austrians from their depressed morale. To be explicit:

(a) Immediate strengthening of the Government by bringing in new elements (Steidle, Starhemberg) who will take away from the present Government its character of being composed simply of a residue from the old regime.

(b) Fusion of all forces and of all fronts into a single national front with the motto: the independence of Austria and the renovation of Austria.

(c) Pronounced dictatorial character of the Government.

(d) Government commissioner for the city of Vienna.

(e) Propaganda on a large scale.

For the speech:

Concerning domestic policy:

(a) Announce the project of constitutional reform in the speech and produce the plan during the month of September; the reform—in its political, economic and social aspects—should be along *Fascist* lines.

(b) Have the reform approved by the Austrian *Bundespräsident* and submit it in the year 1934 to a popular vote with the slogan: Independence in foreign affairs and renovation at home.

(c) Explain that any *attempt to use force* will be met by force, and suppressed.

Concerning foreign policy:

(a) Declarations of friendship towards all neighbours, including Germany, and lay claim to the historical and inalienable *functions* of an independent Austria.

(b) Recognition of the particular relations with Hungary and Italy.

(c) Possibility and necessity of co-operation with the *Little Entente* in economic matters.

(d) Announcement of the possibility of a tripartite (Italy–Austria–Hungary) meeting in order to bring the three States into closer relations in all spheres.

*Excerpts from Dollfuss' Amtserinnerung*

*Notes made for the Foreign Office File of his Discussions with Mussolini at Riccione, August 19 and 20, 1933.*<sup>1</sup>

1. Foreign Policy. Mussolini was critical of German developments, particularly the "ascendancy of Prussianism". . . . "If contrary to Mussolini's expectations an invasion from Bavaria were to occur, Italy would react in a military way. It was quite evident, however, that Mussolini prefers to continue the method of 'friendly conversations' as long as possible."

The project of a meeting between Dollfuss and Gombòs in the late fall was discussed. It would have "the purpose of tightening relations between the two states in all spheres and of establishing a 'common' policy".

2. Political-Economic Policy. "In the course of the conversations it was evident that neither Italy nor France has as yet a precise plan for the reconstruction of the Danubian area. . . . Mussolini is not at all opposed to an intensification of economic relations with the states of the *Little Entente*; on the contrary, he has in mind achieving an advantageous relation with these states also in economic matters."

3. Internal Policy. Mussolini sought "to exert pressure on the Federal Chancellor to get him to agree to a fuller participation of the *Heimwehr*. The Federal Chancellor, however, succeeded in evading this attempt. Mussolini recommended that the Federal Chancellor have his constitutional reform on a corporative basis finished already before the end of September, and that furthermore he should deliver a very important political speech with the *Leitmotiv*, 'the independence of Austria and the renovation of Austria', as soon as possible. The Federal Chancellor assented to this, and accepted the date of September 11 for the speech. In addition, Mussolini urgently recommended the unification of the various patriotic fronts under the exclusive leadership of the Federal Chancellor."

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

*Mussolini to Dollfuss*<sup>1</sup>*Rome, September 9, 1933.*

DEAR CHANCELLOR,

I have just had a visit from Prince Starhemberg, and in two long conversations which I had with him, he gave me a detailed account of the situation of the *Heimwehr*, its relations with the Government, the other parties, and the other Austrian para-military formations.

According to the evidence of Prince Starhemberg—and it is confirmed by other reports which come to me—the National Socialist movement is still working below the surface with undiminished intensity, although it is no longer in the position to give publicity to its activities. It is Starhemberg's impression that the overwhelming majority of these so-called Nazis consists of nothing more than malcontents, who could perhaps be won over to-morrow if the Government and the parties which form the Government would agree to drive in a decisive fashion along the road to Fascism. In this way, the chief objection by which the Nazis justify their opposition to the regime would be removed—namely, that no sufficiently intensive and decisive activity for the renovation of the State is being shown. This lack of trust on the part of the above-mentioned category of dissatisfied people, especially of the youth, in the policy of Your Excellency is above all to be ascribed to the circumstance that certain elements, like the ministers Winkler and Schumy, who are not thought to have the will or intention to bring the country out of the morass of liberalism and democracy, remain in the Government and participate in all official Austrian demonstrations of a political character. I get a little the impression—not only from Prince Starhemberg, but also from numerous other reports which trickle to me from all sides—that Your Excellency's worthy efforts and great passion for the remoulding of the Austrian State are being neutralised by the fact that men who never can be expected to give honest support to your aims continue to occupy political positions of the first importance.

I am convinced, Herr Chancellor, that, in view of the danger which threatens Austria, its salvation can never be achieved by coalitions parliamentary in character, but only by an organised

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.



defence, which bases itself on the youth and rallies around a new idea. For these reasons I submit for your most careful consideration the impressions which I have recently received, and especially after our conversations at Riccione.

With respect to the attitude of the *Heimwehr*, I must explain that I share the apprehensions of Prince Starhemberg, who considers it wise in the present situation to maintain a certain reserve in order to keep greater freedom of movement with respect to dissident groups of young people who perhaps may still be won over.

I should like to believe that the speech which you are going to deliver on the eleventh of this month will succeed in giving a more decisive and more spirited tone to the Austrian policy of renovation, and in the expectation of learning what will be the further development of events in Austria, which I follow with the greatest interest, I extend to you expressions of cordial friendship.

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*Schüller to Dollfuss: Report of Conversation with Mussolini,  
September 15, 1933*<sup>1</sup>

*Excerpt*

Mussolini said that the speech of the Federal Chancellor [Sept. 11] had been excellent and had made an extraordinary impression throughout the world, which also shows what sympathies Austria enjoys everywhere.

I said: the Federal Chancellor wishes to have Signor Mussolini informed that he is working very seriously on the constitution and that it will soon be completed, so that within a short time Austria will have a new economic and political statute. The Federal Chancellor had used the image that he marches quickly, but does not like to have his friends push him from behind—that disturbs the march.

Mussolini laughed heartily, and said that it would be fine if Austria soon gets a constitution. Naturally the constitution

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477. The writer of this dispatch is Richard Schüller, head of the economic and financial section of the Austrian Foreign Office, 1917-18. His *Commercial Policy between Two Wars: Personal Observations of a Participant*, Social Research, Vol. X (May, 1943), is an informative article, but not for the events of 1933.

must be different in each State, depending on its history and relationships, but the principles enunciated by the Federal Chancellor were sound and in accord with the times. Its execution will take the props out from under the National Socialist agitation in Austria and in Germany. "The Austrians are too fine to carry it out in such a way as to make enemies of the whole world as the Germans have done. Italy will then be able to help Austria much better than at present, because a certain inner affinity will exist which will strengthen Italy's position over against Germany. Now the Germans throw it up to me that I support a government against them which has not disposed of Austro-Marxism and Communism."

I said that we are not satisfied with the success of the intervention <sup>1</sup> in Germany, whereupon Mussolini answered: "We and Germany follow contrary policies: Germany wants to annex Austria, while we do not wish that to happen; we wish Austria to remain free and independent. It will make no difference if the Germans solemnly assure us that the Brenner frontier is sacrosanct. Goering told me that when he was here and recalled that he said it long ago and on that account was inveighed against as a traitor. The radio speeches are a continual nuisance, but much more serious was the case of the airplanes which was without any question a violation of the boundary. I have read in German newspapers that an Austrian plane flew over the German border at Passau. Thereupon I said to myself: Aha, the wolf says that the sheep is making an attack; do the Germans want to fly somewhere?"

I told Mussolini that the preparation of bands [!? red-pencilled in margin] was a serious thing and quite inadmissible. M. answered that he had made a *démarche* about it in Berlin. Bülow had replied that they were merely assembling Austrian refugees in camps so that they would not run around loose in Germany.

I asked Signor M.: "Do you believe that?" M. said: "According to our reports 1,700 men are at Gross-Lichterfelde on the boundary and another 2-3,000 men in other camps.—*J'exclue l'idée d'une invasion.*" [!? red-pencilled in margin.] To my question concerning the real meaning of this sentence, M. said: "It is absolutely inadmissible that activities should be organised

<sup>1</sup> Italy "had made friendly representations at Berlin in late July. Wilhelmstrasse disclaimed responsibility for terrorism, but asserted that it would do all in its power to halt the radio and aerial propaganda". F. L. Schuman, *Europe on the Eve*, p. 66.

in one State with the intent of coming over the border and assaulting another state. We cannot tolerate that and would react with military measures against it. I have already made certain preparations to meet such a case. I hope the Germans do not do it and do not begin that sort of conflict with the only friend they have left."

[There follow two paragraphs on economic negotiations.]

P.S.—In connection with the radio propaganda, M. remarked that Habicht had made the cessation of hostilities dependent on four conditions. "These conditions are not acceptable to Austria. Should she accept them, she is lost." Austria was right to maintain a defensive instead of an offensive attitude toward Germany.

7

*Dolfuss to Mussolini*<sup>1</sup>

*Draft*

*September 22, 1933.*

YOUR EXCELLENCY,

I have received Your Excellency's highly-esteemed letter of the ninth of this month, and thank you most cordially for this new indication of most loyal interest and friendly feeling. It was naturally especially valuable to me to be informed by your friendly explanation about the course of Prince Starhemberg's visit in Rome, and in particular to be acquainted with Your Excellency's objective view.

I have made use of the opportunity provided by a visit of Excellency Preziosi shortly before his journey to Rome to explain to the Ambassador my views and reflections about the development of things in Austria in the immediate future, and I have asked him to report this conversation to Your Excellency orally and in more detailed fashion than would be possible in writing. From the message by telephone which I received from His Excellency Suvich, as well as from the especially warm approval of the Italian Press and the reports of Dr. Buresch and Dr. Schüller, I have learned with great pleasure that the statement of my programme in the speech of September 11 won the approval of Your Excellency. I can assure Your Excellency that I am determined to translate

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

this programme into action energetically and with especial regard for Austrian conditions.

The changes in my Government which have been made in the meanwhile represent a further step in the development which I outlined to Your Excellency at Riccione. I have thereby also followed your good advice.

I hope now that I can come forth in a very short time with the basic and worthwhile reforms announced in my statement of programme.

I take this opportunity with pleasure to thank Your Excellency most cordially for your decisive intervention in the question of our export of wood to Italy, which is of such great importance to all the farmers in the Austrian Alps.

Please accept this renewed assurance of the most sincere respect with which I remain, with the most friendly feelings,

Faithfully yours,  
D.

8

*Swich to Dollfuss*<sup>1</sup>

*Strictly confidential*  
*Personal*

HERR FEDERAL CHANCELLOR,

After my short visit to Austria, from which I retain such pleasant memories, I hastened upon my return to Italy to convey my impressions to the Chief of State.

In the first place, I told him that I have received the impression that the Government is in a position to dominate the situation, even though it has reached a critical point, particularly in the provinces; furthermore, I have told him that the strength of the Government at a time of such great political tension resides in the armed forces and the *Heimwehr*, and that the support of the *Heimwehr* is indispensable in order to give the impression of a popular reaction against the Nazis; that the activity of the *Heimwehr*, as well as that of the other similar organisations favourably disposed toward the Government, is necessary in order to keep the army and the police loyal to the Government, since they otherwise would feel themselves isolated from the public as a whole. .

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

I added that I have received the impression, on the other hand, that there is a rather widespread dissatisfaction on account of a certain passivity on the part of the Government and because of the delays in carrying out the work of renovation; furthermore, that the active elements, especially the youthful supporters of the Government, were ready to retain their trust in the Government only if a greater decisiveness and precision became visible in carrying out the work of renovation, which is based on a few sharply outlined principles: the fight against Marxism, the reform of the constitution in an anti-parliamentary and corporative sense, the elimination of parties and the strengthening of the Fatherland Front; finally, that the moment for carrying out this more decisive work can no longer be postponed.

It was also my impression that the great popularity which the Federal Chancellor enjoyed at the time of his entry into the political life of Austria was due above all to the conviction that he was the new man who would clean away all the rubbish of the former democratic Austria; furthermore, that it is necessary in this connection to give the Austrian public no reasons for a disillusionment which would cause the people to turn to the Nazis, in whom they see a firm will for action.

This kind of action—that is, a decisive will for renovation—has justified the defence against Nazi terrorism, and this defence must be carried on with the greatest energy. In this respect, the circumstance that the direction of all political forces has now been given to Vice-Chancellor Fey inspires confidence and trust.

Under these circumstances, I have told the Head of the Government that I consider the cause of Austrian independence and the regime embodied by Your Excellency capable of being saved.

I remarked also that a kind of conspiracy exists, which is partly inspired, partly unconscious, to play up all Nazis activities, since greater significance is attributed to them than they really have. This is a danger, and indeed a serious danger, since it creates a state of mind of the “inevitable.” This danger could be eliminated if the Austrian Government carries out the measures indicated above, which all sound elements in the country now expect and consider urgent.

The Head of the Government has agreed with my presentation. He has authorised me to be determined to the end in supporting Austria in her fight to maintain her independence.

The Head of the Government also thinks it is of the greatest importance to satisfy the active and youthful formations which wish decisive, quick action; it is precisely these people who are willing to risk their lives and to show publicly where they stand—something which is at present more than ever necessary. The Federal Chancellor cannot depend absolutely on the middle-class people, who stay at home, and who, in order to live quietly, are ready to accept any sort of regime to-morrow.

It is probable that my visit will have as a result a certain revival of enthusiasm for the Austrian Government: advantage must be taken of this in order to emphasise its idealistic qualities, which alone are capable of attracting the sound portion of the population and the youth.

The Head of the Government agrees to arrange a meeting of the three states—Italy, Austria and Hungary—in Italy; if possible in Rome, after my visit to Budapest; however, it appears necessary that, in the meantime, you, Herr Federal Chancellor, should complete one of the negotiations which are expected of you in accordance with the Riccione agreements.

In connection with your visit in Budapest, the Head of the Government thinks the time for it is favourable, and is of the opinion that it could take place in the first half of February, while I should go to Budapest immediately afterwards in the second half of the month.

I have taken the liberty, Herr Federal Chancellor, to report to you very frankly and exactly what I told the Head of the Government and what the Head of the Government replied to me, in the conviction that Your Excellency will appreciate the motives of interest in your country which prompts this frankness. The foregoing reflections and remarks have no aim other than to indicate to you, in whose hands all elements for judgment are united, what—from the Italian point-of-view—ought to be done without delay in order to accomplish what is best, to say nothing of being most necessary. The Head of the Government has the impression that it seldom happens that the fate of an entire country can depend, as it does now, on well-timed decisions, and no one is better qualified than you, from every point of view, to act and take care of the pressing problems of the current situation.

With renewed thanks for all the hospitality extended to me during my visit to Vienna, I beg you, Herr Bundeskanzler, to accept this expression of my cordial regards.

SUVICH m. p.

*Private Letter, Dollfuss to Suvich*<sup>1</sup>*Draft**Vienna,  
January 30, 1934.**Very secret*

SEHR GEEHRTER HERR UNTERSTAATSEKRETAR:

Your completely friendly and interesting letter of January 26 has reached me. It has given me real pleasure to hear from Your Excellency again that you enjoyed yourself during your short stay in Vienna. I can assure you, for my part, that I, too, was delighted to be able to discuss matters thoroughly with you once more. Your Excellency's visit to Vienna has, without any question, had an extremely good effect both here and abroad, and the public statements of Your Excellency have made a great impression, especially in the Austrian circles whose attitude towards events has been a wavering one. The popular mood which has been so favourably influenced by you will not remain unexploited from our side, and the tempo of our positive activity already shows a perceptible quickening.

The friendly exposition of your concrete impressions, as well as the sympathetic understanding with which His Excellency, the much-esteemed Head of the Royal Government, received them, are of particular interest to me.

I have, in accordance with our agreement, upon receipt of your esteemed letter indicated my readiness to make a two-day visit to the Royal Hungarian Government during the week of February 5-12—provided no postponement is necessary because of the development of our conflict with Germany, and I have just received a communication from the Hungarian Government that February 7 and 8 are planned for my visit. I shall not fail to have you informed, esteemed Herr Under-Secretary of State, by means of Herr Preziosi, about the impression which I receive there.

Since I look forward with pleasure to occasions in prospect which, I trust, will offer me opportunity to see you again soon, I remain, with assurance of my especial esteem and most cordial greetings,

Respectfully yours,  
D.

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Italien, Fasz. 477.

*Rintelen to Dollfuss*<sup>1</sup>

*Conversation with the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs on  
Austro-German Relations*

*Rome, February 2, 1934.*

HERR FEDERAL CHANCELLOR,

As I have already reported by telegraph, I had the opportunity to-day to have a thorough discussion with Excellency Suvich *à propos* of the communication, which I made as instructed concerning the contents of the German reply. When I remarked in this connection that in view of the negative success of the step taken in Berlin, the question of laying it before the League of Nations now becomes an immediate problem [? in margin], Herr Suvich explained that he regarded such a step as a bad solution, and sought to justify his view in a thorough-going way.

He pointed first to the circumstances that Germany had left the League, which therefore would have to deliberate and make a decision without participation in the discussions by one of the States directly interested. I took issue with this, saying that the League of Nations was a competent forum for dealing with the question, and it would contradict all legal principles if the proceedings were frustrated simply by the absence of the German Government. Herr Suvich admitted that this was to a certain extent correct, but remarked that nevertheless Germany under these circumstances would meet any decision of the League of Nations with the objection that only one side had been heard. I answered that once the competence of the League of Nations is established, it suffices if the other side is given opportunity to state its case. It must be made quite clear that in this situation Austria can rely absolutely on support by the other Powers. Herr Suvich now pointed out that serious drawbacks simply in the matter of procedure also exist. The process in the League of Nations would last much too long; first a commission would be set up, and then would come the difficulty of enforcement. The Under-Secretary of State agreed, in this connection, that no doubt exists that the German Government is back of the National-Socialist agitation in Austria.

I now made the remark that Herr Suvich had still not shown

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Deutschland, Fasz. 466.



me anything to substitute for bringing the matter before the League, while at the same time he argues that League of Nations proceedings are avoidable. Herr Suvich answered that there is a tentative idea that the Great Powers make the matter a subject of undercover discussion and come to an agreement among themselves about the attitude to take. One could always reserve the invocation of the League of Nations as a last resort. [! ! ? red-pencilled in margin.] I immediately pointed out to him that the nature of the Austrian step in Berlin, which has now had a negative result, made it necessary to take some action immediately. Any hesitation would certainly give the impression of uncertainty and the position of the Austrian Government with respect to its opponents would be weakened. In the interest of strengthening the Austrian Government the action must certainly be such as to indicate that the Great Powers are backing up the Chancellor and the Government.

Suvich replied that he was not in a position to make a statement to-day about the steps to be taken. He would first have to speak about it with the Head of the Government, and will let me know in two or three days. I asked him the direct question if I could inform my Government that it could reckon on the support of Italy under all circumstances, which he absolutely affirmed, while adding that he had instructed the Italian envoy in Vienna yesterday by telegraph to get him a copy of the German reply immediately and to request the Austrian Government to do nothing until the Italian Government had time to study the matter.

Herr Suvich then elaborated his views about the National-Socialist movement in general in Austria, and remarked that in his opinion there are two kinds of National-Socialists: those who want the *Anschluss*, and a second group who simply want "something new". So far as the first are concerned, in case the *Anschluss* should occur, they would learn within half a year at most what the disadvantageous consequences would be for themselves. For a while they would be treated as heroes, then they would be ruthlessly pushed aside by Prussian elements. One must take the wind out of the sails of the second group by an intensified fight against the Social-Democrats, by a light colouration of anti-Semitism, and by hastening with the constitution. He remarked that it was known to him that the Jews are loyally supporting the Government, but that placed before the choice of a National-Socialist government or one with a

tinge of anti-Semitism, they would certainly choose the latter. I pointed out that at this decisive hour long-range considerations are beside the point, since the Austrian people ought to get the impression as soon as possible that steps are being taken which will show clearly that the Great Powers are backing up the Chancellor and the Government and are supporting them under all circumstances.

RINTELEN.

II

Excerpts from a memorandum entitled

*A General View of the Political Situation in Austria*

The memorandum, excerpts of which are published here, was written at the request of Schuschnigg for Kohlruss, Austrian emissary at the Vatican. To the draft of the memorandum, a document of nine typewritten pages bearing the date November 28, 1935,<sup>1</sup> there is attached the following explanatory note:

"The apostolic Nuncio has indicated to the Federal Minister,<sup>2</sup> as well as to the Federal Chancellor, that the Vatican is apparently being informed about the domestic situation in Austria by circles, possibly Austrian, which are not altogether favourably disposed toward us. As Herr Nuncio himself very cautiously indicated, he supposes that the Kunschak<sup>3</sup> circle, which is in certain respects dissatisfied with the development of the domestic political situation, has availed itself of indirect channels to furnish the Vatican with information and criticisms."

Part I of the memorandum is called *Background of the present situation*.

(a) *The Constitution of the Republic* and its relation to current troubles: In theory the constitution "rendered homage to extreme parliamentary-democratic principles; actually, in the first years after the revolution it gave the Social-Democrats especial political opportunities".

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Oesterreich, Fasz. 467.

<sup>2</sup> Presumably Egon Berger-Waldenegg, the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

<sup>3</sup> Leopold Kunschak was leader of the Labour element within the Christian Social Party. Cf. Kunschak's *Oesterreich*, 1918-34 (Vienna, 1934). Schuschnigg comments briefly on Kunschak in *My Austria*, p. 109.

(b) *Radicalism and Anti-Clericalism of the Social-Democrats:* "The first period of the new republic was marked, in terms of cultural politics, by a regrettable tendency towards a strongly pronounced anti-religious attitude, in connection with which it ought not to be forgotten that the Austrian Social-Democracy, because of the lack of any organised Communist movement worth mentioning, was largely led by Jewish intellectuals, who could only be attracted by a radicalism which moved in an extremely revolutionary direction; this radicalism distinguished itself from the wholly Communist and half-Communist movements of the neighbouring countries at most in methods, not, however, in aims."

(c) *Pan-Germanism:* The power of "the strongly nationalistic movement" is emphasised; described as being "recruited mainly from professional people in the larger and medium-sized cities, from enthusiasts for gymnastics and singing, from employees of business firms, and so on". The "conservative-minded" generally are said to be attracted by the idea of *Anschluss* with Germany.

(d) The failure to overcome the domestic tension during the first years of the Republic is explained in terms of the following factors: the economic crisis, the lack of strong authority, the radicalisation of the masses, the arming of civilian groups. "So there arose the Republican Defence Corps as the army of revolutionary socialism, and its counterpart, the *Heimatschutz*, a rightist radical self-defence movement, whose strength lay mostly in the prevailing agricultural parts of Austria."

Part II deals with the policy of Seipel, which is summed up in terms of the rehabilitation of Austria based on the aid of the Great Powers. "The political presupposition of this work of rehabilitation was the exclusion of the Social-Democracy from power in the State." Seipel sought to achieve his aims by working with a coalition of Christian-Socials and nationalist middle-class parties. "This coalition could, indeed, effectively prevent the seizure of political power by the Socialists, but was not able to bring about lasting order in the state, because the constitution, now as before, prevented the achievement of a responsible political leadership; and the leadership consequently remained dependent on temporary compromises."

Part III is entitled *The Political Era of the Chancellor Dr. Dollfuss*. His policy is explained on the grounds that the economic and political situation (particularly the constant threat from Germany) made necessary the setting up of a

"strong public authority. The elimination of Socialism—whose co-operation always was to be gained only by the abandonment of essential cultural and political claims, and whose continuance would have evoked sooner or later a latent civil war—was urgently necessary at the moment when, in February 1934, without any cause the Socialists made an armed uprising."

There follows a brief account of the continuing Nazi agitation and of the assassination of Dollfuss in the attempted *putsch* of July 1934.

"Since then no significant attempt at revolution has been undertaken; still there can be no doubt that the Socialists, as well as the National-Socialists, nourish the hope that the time may come when they can seize political power by force. The Socialists dream of a dictatorship of the proletariat after the Communist pattern, the National-Socialists of the expansion of the Third Reich and of its ideas and methods to Austria; it is to be noted that both of these extreme political groups are characterised by the most intense hatred of the Church and by an unqualified anti-Catholic attitude; they do not stop at any means in order to realise their cultural-political ideal.

"A sharing of responsibility with either the Socialists or National-Socialists is inconceivable, because each of these groups fundamentally rejects the Christian State of Austria, and concerning these fundamental principles no compromise is possible."<sup>1</sup>

"Therefore the present alignment is the only possible one, even if the interests of certain individuals, and perhaps even the rights of certain individuals, are endangered."

The criticism that the *Heimatschutz* contains many anti-clerical elements is met by the statement that the organisation includes people with all sorts of views on the Catholic question. "The purpose of the present internal policy in Austria is to bring together all conservative forces without regard for differences."

<sup>1</sup> In his most recent book, *Austrian Requiem* (London, 1947), Schuschnigg is less dogmatic about these matters, so far as they concern the Socialists.

*Letter of the Austrian Emissary at the Vatican to the  
Austrian Foreign Minister*

The reception of the memorandum of November 28, 1935, at the Vatican is described in the following dispatch from Kohlruss, Austrian emissary at the Vatican, to Berger-Waldenegg, Minister for Foreign Affairs:<sup>1</sup>

*Very confidential*

Rome, December 7, 1935.

HERR FEDERAL MINISTER,

I am pleased to announce that I had the opportunity to-day to carry out your instructions: I have made use of the occasion also to give to the Cardinal Secretary of State<sup>2</sup> as *aide-memoire* a copy of the *exposé* written on plain paper.

No one in the highest, or high, positions at the Vatican has ever made a remark to me on proceedings affecting the Church—neither a remark of such a critical nature nor one of such a narrative character.

Occasional remarks referred only to National-Socialist activities, and had the tenor indicated in my report, No. 23, of October 4; to this I would like to add my personal impression that they [the Vatican authorities] do not appear to think that there is any likelihood of a sudden attack from abroad, but consider that—in so far as there is any danger—it resides inside Austria itself and in those directions indicated in the report itself.

Worries about proceedings affecting the Church would only be justified if the National-Socialist efforts were to succeed or if National-Socialist infiltrations were to take place. To illustrate the astonishment of the Secretary of State [*meines Mitredners*] concerning the "cause" of our representations, I would like to add his certainly sincerely-meant remark, that he regrets very much that without any real reason we should have felt moved to produce this very extensive work.<sup>3</sup>

KOHLRUSS.

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Oesterreich, Fasz. 467. The dispatch is translated here in its entirety.

<sup>2</sup> Cardinal Pacelli, the present Pope Pius XII.

<sup>3</sup> !! blue-pencilled in margin.

*"Recent English Feelers with respect to a Democratization of the Austrian Regime" <sup>1</sup>*

Vienna, December 18, 1935.

*Memorandum of a conversation (Amtserinnerung)*

The French ambassador Puaux communicated to the undersigned,<sup>2</sup> under the seal of greatest secrecy, that the British ambassador had recently told him that he had received from an "authoritative" English source a private letter in which his opinion had been asked as to whether the moment had come, in view of the international political situation, to do something about democratizing the Austrian regime. Selby<sup>3</sup> is supposed to have answered that he is not at all of this opinion; on the contrary, that he must say that one ought to leave the Austrian Government alone so long as it is engaged in a difficult fight with Germany for the maintenance of Austrian independence.

M. Puaux begged me to keep this in strictest confidence, since on his part he had had to promise Selby that he would not say anything about it to other persons.

The above was communicated to the Federal Minister.

*Excerpts from the reports of "Martin", an Austrian agent <sup>5</sup>*

*A. Report from Budapest*

*Very confidential*

Vienna, September 17, 1933.

"Professor Hantos, former Minister of State, the well-known expert on Central Europe: <sup>4</sup>

"Hantos has been rather pessimistically informed by Austrians that they know they still have to reckon with an

<sup>1</sup> State Archives, Vienna, Liasse Oesterreich, Fasz. 467.

<sup>2</sup> The document is initialled, but I was unable to decipher it.

<sup>3</sup> The British ambassador.

<sup>4</sup> See note 1 overleaf.

<sup>5</sup> A considerable file of reports from this agent from the years 1933 and 1934 is in the State Archives, Vienna, Fasz. 1006. A notation in the file

open conflict in the fall. (As is known, Hantos was in Vienna a few days ago, where he spoke confidentially with Dr. Kienböck<sup>2</sup> and also with important officials in the Government.) Hantos expresses very openly his critical judgment of the policy now emanating from Rome. He thinks that the influence being exercised on Berlin by Italy is already leading to a regrettable division into two camps."

*B. Excerpts from a report of a conversation with  
Louis Eisenmann<sup>3</sup>*

*Vienna, September 17, 1933.*

"On Saturday at Velden am Woerthersee I had a lengthy conversation with Louis Eisenmann, Professor at the Sorbonne, an adviser to the French Government on Central European questions, and a distinguished expert on these matters with great influence in Paris."

The official French view is that "developments in Austria must be the object of special and careful observation". For the present Italy is being given precedence, but without any conviction that the Roman policy will succeed in bringing order. France wants to win time to reach an agreement with England. Eisenmann had always been sceptical about an agreement between Italy and France, but now he is optimistic. "This does not mean, naturally, that the fears of wide French circles have been removed that Italy could still encourage a development in Austria which finally would lead to the establishment of a North-South Fascist front."

The test of Italian policy will be the independence of Austria and what Italy will do to maintain it. "In France one is not only inclined to insure Austria's independence, but one wishes

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indicates that it was taken to Berlin after the *Anschluss* and returned to Vienna, via the Kriegsarchiv, in 1942. "Martin" was a native of Carinthia; a Socialist, according to a statement attributed to him. He reported particularly on Carinthian politics and on foreign politics. To judge by the initialling Dollfuss would appear to have been more interested in the Carinthian reports than in those about foreign affairs. Wickham Steed, the British publicist and specialist on Austrian affairs, is mentioned in the file as one of "Martin's close contacts abroad."

<sup>1</sup> Elemer Hantos was professor at the University of Budapest. Brief comment on Hantos' work in Paul Sweet, *Recent German Literature on Mitteleuropa in Journal of Central European Affairs*, Vol. III (April, 1943).

<sup>2</sup> Victor Kienböck was president of the Austrian National Bank.

<sup>3</sup> Report from "Martin", State Archives, Vienna, Fasz. 1006.

also to hinder any development in Austria itself which could lead to a condition which would be practically the same as a *Gleichschaltung* or *Anschluss*."

"Recently three French experts studied the domestic political situation in Austria. The result of their investigations was rather uniform. They emphasise the necessity of differentiating the situation according to the provinces, and lay especial weight on the psychological imponderables. They miss the mobilization of all forces in the country which are loyal to the idea of an independent Austria, and at present the majority of the population certainly is loyal to Austria. The project of the new constitution, in so far as one is acquainted with it, is being compared to Schmerlings' concept,<sup>1</sup> which quickly went to pieces. In any case, it is their opinion that the Dollfuss cabinet has too little resonance in the population, and they do not believe that one should be fooled by the elaborate political rallies, since in general the situation is not to be so correctly sized up in Vienna as in the western provinces.

"Eisenmann stressed the fact that the President of the French Republic seriously interests himself in the Austrian question, and that the three experts were told to report personally to Lebrun—a quite extraordinary and unusual thing.

"Diplomatically expressed, France wants noticeable respect to be observed for Western European views on the reorganisation of Austria, in order that France will be in an inner-political situation to give Austria further help.<sup>2</sup>

"In reality France has the aim of hindering an Austro-Fascist solution. And, indeed, for various reasons.

"It is clear to the French that the Government cannot afford to collaborate openly with the Social-Democrats, but the anti-Marxist course ought nevertheless to be somewhat corrected. For example, the French would be very much displeased if a governmental commissioner should be installed in Vienna. They are very exactly informed about the mistakes of the Social-Democrats, especially on the Wienzeile, and are fully of the view that an authoritarian line is possible in Austria, but the dictatorship must emphatically be clothed in legal forms.

<sup>1</sup> This refers to the so-called February Patent of 1861 to which Eisenmann had devoted a chapter in his great work, *Le Compromis Austro-Hongrois de 1876: Etude sur le Dualisme* (Paris, 1904). The statement that the February Patent quickly went to pieces is scarcely in accord with what Eisenmann says about it on page 260 of his book.

<sup>2</sup> ! blue-pencilled in margin.



"Eisenmann has the impression that Dollfuss would not lose anything by an empowering act approved by parliament; actually all previous emergency decrees could be legalised retroactively. He believes he is in a position to know that the Social-Democrats will finally make no demand other than that they be permitted to carry on their activity in strictly legal forms."

Eisenmann then touched upon the kind of pressure France could exert in order to get Austria into line.

"Finance Minister Buresch will experience the first tangible evidence of these French desires if he comes to Paris in order to get consent for the domestic loan. One will give him to understand in moderate but none the less clear tones that inner-political guarantees will be the most important presupposition so far as any further assistance from France is concerned.

"With respect to the Social-Democracy, one does not mean in any sense the Wienzeile, since one has sufficient understanding in France of the evil effects of a doctrinaire policy; but one notices with interest certain differences among the Social-Democrats, which would make it possible to guide this party back into an Austrian course. One must, however, give the party time to find its way back."

### *C. Reports from London*

*Report from London*  
*Strictly confidential*

*Innsbruck, November 14, 1933.*

"My London source reports that Professor Seton Watson has spoken to him recently about the great concern which prevails in all political circles in London about the present situation in Austria. It is considered impossible to introduce an Austro-Fascist solution which will not soon give way to National Socialism." <sup>1</sup>

*Report from London*

*November 22, 1933.*

Martin reports that he has been informed about a meeting of Central European experts at the Foreign Office; the meeting, he says, was attended by Professor Seton Watson; Mr. Sergeant, Secretary of the Central European section; Mr. Allen Leeper, chairman of the League of Nations section; and Mr. Rex

<sup>1</sup> Report from "Martin", State Archives, Vienna, Fasz. 1006.

Leeper, the Foreign Office press chief. Sergeant is reported to be thinking along the following lines: <sup>1</sup>

"He inclines in his judgment towards the opinion, frequently heard here, that an Austro-Fascist totalisation, which does not sooner or later deteriorate into National Socialism, scarcely appears possible, and that a broadening of the political base in another direction will have to be sought. It is rather clear to Mr. Sergeant, on the other hand, that the leadership of the Social-Democratic Party in Austria has taken an unacceptable position, just as practical Socialist policy in almost all countries works itself out in such an intolerable fashion. . . . On the other hand, he considers the immediate and violent annihilation of Socialism unnecessary, since Socialism everywhere on the Continent is preparing its own successive collapse. . . . His critical view of the Austro-Fascist direction does not derive merely from material considerations, but also from the opinion which one has in London of the political qualities of the *Heimwehr* leaders, Starhemberg and Fey. Both, to be sure, are admitted to be aggressive personalities, but possessed of few statesman-like talents."

<sup>1</sup> Report from "Martin", State Archives, Vienna, Fasz. 1006.

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